OLD AND NEW THEOLOGY.

A CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE.

BY

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"Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."—MATT. xiii. 52.

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To the Revered Memory

OF

ALEXANDRE VINET OF VEVAY,

AND

THOMAS ERSKINE OF LINLATHEN,

MY TWO MASTERS IN THEOLOGY,

TO WHOM I OWE THE THOUGHT OF A "CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE OF THEOLOGY,"

BASED ON KANT'S METHOD IN PHILOSOPHY,

AT ONCE DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE,

I DEDICATE

THIS ATTEMPT TO FIND THE OLD IN THE NEW AND THE NEW IN THE OLD.

"*Ceux qui auront été intelligents brilleront comme la splendeur de l'étendue: et ceux qui en auront amené plusieurs à la justice luiront comme les étoiles à toujours et a perpetuité.*"—DANIEL xii. 3.

INSCRIPTION ON VINET'S GRAVE AT CLARENS.

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PREFACE.

THE oft-quoted remark of Vinet, that "even now, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, we may be involved in some tremendous error of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed," must be my excuse for attempting what will seem alike to dogmatists and sceptics a presumptuous task. A "constructive critique of Theology, old and new," implies that there is both a constant and a variant element in faith: dogmatists deny the latter and sceptics the former. As a result of this, our age stands between these two Theologies, that of the past and that of the future, in an attitude of indecision which reminds us of the phrase applied to the political deadlock of Germany a few years ago, *Gehemmter Fortschritt, Gefordeter Rücktritt,* "Progress hindered," "Reaction forwarded." This is the mocking comment of our age on its theological guides, who can neither break with the past nor throw themselves forward into the future. We stand where two ways meet, uncertain which course to take. Theology sits like Theseus turned to stone, "sedet æternumque sedebit, Infelix Theseus."

It is this fossilized aspect of spiritual truth, fixed in form instead of clothing itself in fresh form at each fresh age of the world, which leads men to ask whether there can be a living truth of God at all. If God has "more light to break out of His word," as Robinson told the Pilgrim Fathers at Leyden, it must be said of our day as of his, that no one seems on the look-out for it.

Much of our modern scepticism is accounted for by this attitude of divines. This age, like other ages, has its own ruling ideas, its *Zeit-geist*, which is summed up in the humanitarian phrase of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number." Medicine and jurisprudence have revised their teaching in harmony with these ruling ideas. Theology alone holds back under the fear of unsettling men's minds. But men's minds are already unsettled, and it is this fear of change which only widens the breach and deepens the existing unsettlement. When Beccaria, on the eve of the great reform of jurisprudence, described the story of human progress as "presenting the picture of an immense sea of error in which only a few, in confusion, and at a great distance from each other, emerge to the surface of truth," he had no thought of dogmatic Theology with its wrecks strewed on a sea of error; and yet the same criticism which detected error in law may also detect error in Theology. It is upwards of twenty years since I first set myself to trace out what seemed to me to be the missing link in our popular Theology. A spiritual Theology seemed to presuppose some spiritual faculty in men; I was led in this way to

trace the error of all dogmatic Theology to its one tap-root in a defective psychology. In a previous work on the *Tripartite Nature of Man*, I pointed out that with the exception of the Alexandrian school of Platonizing divines, theologians in general have neglected Christian psychology, and so have lost the key to such dogmas as original sin, conversion, regeneration, and the restitution of all things. So true is the phrase, *Eheu! paupertina philosophia desinit in paupertinam theologiam.*

The poverty-stricken Theology of the West dates from the time when a shallow unscriptural conception of man became the "ruling idea" of Latin divines. We do the great Augustine injustice when we make him exclusively responsible for this. He was incomparably the greatest Church teacher of the school of the North African dogmatic divines, who were all moulded on a bad model. It is Tertullian, more than any one else, who is responsible for having given the Theology of the West a wrong set with his crude literalism and sensuous misconception of future rewards and punishments. Uneasy suspicions, it is true, have stirred the best minds of all ages to seek out this root error, and to detect the leaven hid in the three measures of meal. But whether it was the leaven of the Pharisees as formalism, or of the Sadducees as scepticism, or both combined, the Pietists of the past have been unable to say. They have failed to strike their finger on the defect of Theology, and while using the Pauline contrasts between flesh and spirit they have not gone deep down to the root of the difference between the first and the second

Adam, and so to explain what we commonly speak of as the Fall. For want of a sound psychology to supplement Theology, these very divines who denounced the Babylonian captivity of the Church either to Popish or prelatist errors have, with a few insignificant exceptions, bowed the neck uninquiringly to a tradition of North African Theology, which they accepted as Paulinism pure and simple, when in reality it is a strange perversion of the good news of which the great apostle of the Gentiles was the chief messenger.

Educated men have long seen this, and trained divines have always had their *scilicets* and *distinguos* with which to slip out of the knots of a too crabbed and scholastic Theology. But the laity have felt that a system burdened with so many difficulties and contradictions, with limitations on the right hand arising from God's decrees, and on the left hand from man's free will, was scarcely worthy of its Divine Author. The comment of Alphonso of Castile on the Ptolemean astronomy, "with cycles and epicycles scribbled o'er," that if called in, he could have suggested a much more simple system, is what men have said of the current Theology. There has sprung up, then, a deepening impression on all sides that a new Theology is called for by a new age. The "ruling ideas" in jurisprudence and medicine have all been silently revised and renewed, and it is only in Theology that the same "ruling ideas" pass on from age to age unquestioned and unchallenged. The assumption that Paulinism and the popular Theology are inseparable is the root of much

current unbelief. It explains the attacks of its open enemies, and also accounts for the failure of its ablest apologists. As a matter of fact, neither the attack nor the defence touches the real point in dispute. The one assumes that the source must be tainted from whence such turbid waters flow, the other that the river must be pure whose source proceeds from "the throne of God and of the Lamb." Both sides are thus contending on wrong issues, and so they tilt on for ever without touching each other's shields.

The remedy lies deeper, and in a direction which, as a people, we are constitutionally indisposed to take. Goethe, who was no unfriendly judge of the English character as a whole, described us "a practical people but pedantic, and that our vision was limited in all directions outside affairs." This is a true witness, and the price that we pay for our genius, for the affairs of real life, is a certain speculative timidity, and a distrust of any root-and-branch criticism of our theological traditions. The modern Englishman has the same contempt for what, in his conceited ignorance, he describes as cloudy German metaphysics, as the rough Roman of the early empire had of the starveling Greek, the *Græculus esuriens* of Juvenal's time. Hence his distrust of such a phrase as a "New Theology." He has no objection to verbal criticism of such phrases as the "Fall," or "Imputation," or "Satisfaction," but then they must be verbal only.

But in Germany, where, for a variety of reasons,

Dogmatik has long since passed into *Dogmen-Geschichte*, there is less distrust than with us of a thoroughgoing criticism. Ever since Kant led the way as a *Bahn-brecher*, pathfinder, and pioneer in one, as we should read the phrase, philosophy first, and after it Theology, have in Germany moved in this path of constructive criticism. The ruling ideas of an age, such as that of the Deists, is felt to be inadequate to express the beliefs of an age which is not deistic at all, and whose very way of looking at the supernatural differs *in toto* from that of our fathers.

In America as well as in Germany, though for different reasons, a critique of religion at once destructive and constructive will not have to break through so thick a crust of prejudice as in this country. The American intellect is set in some respects in a different mould from ours. There is not the same distrust of novelty. On the contrary, the same inventive skill which is let loose on mechanical novelties, some of them only "notions" at best, runs also out into mental and moral inventions. In a new world, a new Theology does not perplex the mind with fear of change as much as it would in the old world. There is another reason for this greater openness of mind in America. As it was there that the Theology of Calvin was pushed to the last point of logical consistency by Jonathan Edwards and his school, so the reaction has set in there with the most rigorous consistency. New England Theology has long had its "old lights" and "new lights," its "hard shell" and "soft shell" Calvinists: but now that

Unitarianism and Universalism have stepped in to claim some of the spoils of war, and are the residuary legatees in many cases of the old ultra-Calvinistic Churches now defunct, there is a disposition and a desire on all sides to reconstruct Theology out of its ruins.

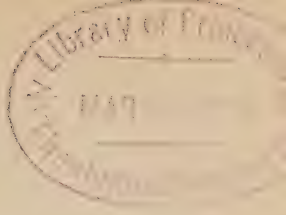
No such necessity having arisen, as yet at least, in this country, we shall be told that we are only unsettling men's minds by raising such questions at all. But our answer is, that men's minds are unsettled already, and that the very worst state that a Church could fall into is when men outwardly conform to it while they dissent inwardly. We are not, happily, sunk so low in this respect as they are in France, where one sex are *dévots* and the other sex *libres penseurs*. But we are fast approaching it, and this too pedantic adherence to antiquated phrases, out of which the primary and spiritual import has been evacuated by constant iteration, is only hastening on the crisis. It is not too late to avoid this eclipse of faith, or as we may describe it, this glacial epoch of the world when faith dies down into agnostic indifference, if we only have the courage of our convictions. To do this, we must brush aside as irrelevant the cautions of the timid and time-serving, the warnings of the narrow and dogmatic, and harder still to bear, the sneers of the indifferent and the sceptical, who are the most dangerous by far of the three classes with whom we differ. As for the timid, who think they take their religion straight out of their English Bibles, and are unconscious how much muddy

metaphysics enters into the popular Theology, we can only ask them to pass the subject by altogether. A critique of philosophy is written for philosophers, and equally so, a critique of Theology for theologians. Turning to those unnatural allies, the dogmatists and the sceptics, we may leave their objections to answer each other. It is more than we dare expect that this, or any other work of apology, will slay these hydras of doubt and dogmatism sent to strangle the infant spiritual consciousness. But our standpoint and aim may be summed up in a word, as the attempt to restate the truths of the old Theology in the light of this spiritual consciousness. The pneuma, or God-consciousness, is dormant but not dead in every man. It has been said by Dean Stanley that there are three ages of Church history—the Petrine, or that of Dogmatic Catholicism; the Pauline, or of Dogmatic Protestantism; and the coming age of Johannine of mystical and spiritual thought which we are now entering on. This contrast is fanciful if carried too far, and certainly none but the Tübingen school would pretend that these contending types of Theology were not harmonized among the apostles themselves. But it is not saying too much to observe that as there has been a dogmatic hierarchical and a dogmatic Biblical type of Christianity, so the type we are entering on to-day is at once freer and more devout than the two former. The Theology of the future, as we may call it, aims at absorbing all that was good in the old Rationalism, and also in the old Mysticism, long and widely divided. The new Theology is thus distinct from

the old, and yet it is its legitimate descendant and its heir-at-law. Parent and child may misunderstand each other, as is often the case, and busy flatterers and mockers on both sides may make mischief by widening the breach which they should desire to close. But we need not be shaken in our faith in an ultimate reconcilement of old and new forms of truth by these alarms. When did a new truth ever enter the human mind unless under storm and stress? It is so with the kingdom of heaven. It is taken by violence, and the violent take it by force. Hence we have no wish to minimize these contrasts, or to tone them down to the level of the platitudinarian party, who first denounce the use of such a phrase as a new Theology, and then end when it has won its way by saying sapiently, "we always thought so." The late Dr. Whewell used to say that every new view of science had to pass through these three stages, and he added that he had lived through all three experiences himself. 1. It was absurd. 2. It was contrary to the Bible. 3. We always thought so.

It will not be long—the writer himself may live to see it—when this new Theology will pass into the third stage, when its opponents will say, "we always thought so." This will be the sure sign that its work is done. It will then be time for it to give place to some fresher type of thought. So, let us add, in conclusion, each age may and should construct its own Theology. Let the twentieth century outgrow the ruling ideas of the nineteenth as much as we do those of the eighteenth.

We shall be the last to complain that our work has become obsolete. It was so with that now forgotten but once famous work, Abraham Tucker's *Light of Nature*. Tucker did good yeoman's service for the eighteenth century, as it is our desire to do for our own age. For both him and me it should be enough if we can make some crooked places straight and some rough places smooth before the coming of Christ, and to remember "He must increase, but I must decrease."



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OLD and New Theology,—many will not admit the existence of such a contrast at all, much less that a revealed Theology can ever belong to the class of things which "decayeth and waxeth old, and is ready to vanish away." Is not Theology, they say, the vesture of that Church which itself is the body of Christ? Who will dare to rend away that seamless coat woven from the top throughout? There are minds to whom the presumption of offering a new Theology in place of the old will seem as great as that of Baxter, who undertook, at the Savoy Conference, to compile a new liturgy, and in a few days actually drafted the outline of it. The more grave and important the subject is, the less we relish novelties. In religion, beyond anything else, we are ready to say that what is true is not new, and what is new cannot be true. Even innovations in religion must come in marked with a certain archaic air, and stamped with a sham mark of antiquity. Hence the very term a "new Theology" seems to strike a jarring note. Præscription, called in as early as Tertullian, and when the Church was in its comparative infancy, seems to cry out against novelties

in Theology, and more than all against the presumptuous attempt of setting up a new body of divinity in place of the old.

We have to meet this objection *in limine*, and to point out how far and to what extent the old is to give place to the new. For this reason, and not to raise unnecessary alarms, we may at once begin by laying down the limits within which this inquiry is carried out, and what we propose to touch, and what we propose to turn aside from. Theology may be said to fall under two great divisions: the one we call its documentary side, and the other its dogmatic. The documentary side of Theology we propose to pass by, and to confine ourselves to the dogmatic. In so far as Christianity is a book religion, we may leave it to stand or fall on its own merits. It is not the book itself or its contents, but the dogmatic inferences drawn from that book, which are out of date in our day, and call for revision. Lastly, it may help to lighten the charge of presumption if we go on to point out the spirit in which we write and the object we aim at. The term "new Theology" has long been regarded as a ground for all that is vague, negative, and indefinite. "Neology" is the term by which it is waved away as an impertinence by men who hate indefiniteness in matters of faith. We are reminded that even Goethe once remarked that he was tired of hearing of men's doubts. If you have any clear-cut convictions he will listen to them, but as for doubts and difficulties he had enough of his own already. There is so much sound sense in this remark that we shall act upon it and not remove a single barrier against unbelief without offering to set up a better in its stead. The teachers, in a word, of the new Theology must take at least as high ground as those of the old, if they are to gain the ears of the

majority of busy men who have no time for weighing doubtful propositions. To them religion is an affair of daily life, the guide of conduct, the ultimate standard of right and wrong. Such men must be shown that the old Theology has fallen into disrepute, not merely because it is crabbed and scholastic, and does not fall in with the *Zeit Geist*, whatever that means, if it means anything at all better than the doctrine fashioned to the varying hour. The true reason for calling for a new Theology is because the old is in many cases arbitrary, and does not meet the deeper demands of conscience. Some of its dogmas, such as that of vicarious punishment, are based on conceptions doubtful even according to the ideas of the old jurisprudence, and which no jurist of our day would admit to be justice. The contradiction, again, between the dogma of man's total corruption by the Fall, and his accountability for sin, which is the inherited taint and corruption of our nature, is too great to be got over by any patching up of the old Augustinian dogma. It must be restated from beginning to end, and the primitive truth set free from the additaments of later ages. If this can be done with any degree of success, then we may hope to raise men from the state to which they have settled down, which is a despair of any definiteness in Theology, the end of which can only be agnostic indifference. The Hobbism of our day is Hegelianism, or the attempt to retain old dogmas after a new meaning has been put into them. In opposition to this, which is the most deadly form of scepticism, we desire boldly to face the question, and, instead of dishonest evasions and insincere compromises, to survey the whole field of Theology, removing all that is obsolete, and retaining only such truths as will stand this test, that they are derived direct from Scripture and commend themselves directly to the conscience.

Setting out thus within the limits prescribed, we pass by all that we may call the documentary part of religion and confine ourselves to the dogmatic. Divines have usually summed up the *Corpus Theologiæ* under four divisions: Bibliology, Theology proper, Soteriology, and Eschatology. The first includes all questions concerning the Scriptures as the historical revelation of God to mankind. The second sums up all that we know concerning the Divine Being. The third unfolds the history, method, and philosophy of Redemption or Salvation; and the fourth seeks to unveil what will be the future lot of mankind as good or evil. Of the first of these divisions, Bibliology, we shall have little or nothing to say. The new Theology sets out as much as the old with the assumption of a revelation of God's will to men, conveyed by inspired messengers and through two special channels known as Prophecy and Miracle. With regard to questions of inspiration, or the psychological mode of action of the Divine Spirit on apostles and prophets, the new Theology, unlike the old, maintains a wise reserve. As for such a phrase as verbal inspiration, it regards it as a contradiction *ex vi terminis.* It is based on a shallow Nominalism, which assumes that words are the mere counters of thought. We forget that between thoughts and things there is only one bridge, and that no ideas ever could arise unless clothed in speech. Much more near to the mark is the German saying: *Braut ist das Wort: Brautigam der Geist.* Nor has the new Theology much more respect for the second phrase, "*plenary* inspiration," since it sees that the term "plenary" is only a relative term. It has no meaning beyond "authoritative," since, if we once admit that revelation is a progressive scheme, we must also allow degrees of inspiration. We do not know any divine who now pretends that revelation is

not pitched on a progressive scale of inspiration, alike of matter and manner, from Moses to Christ. There must be very few left of the old mechanical school who would place the inspiration of the Apostle Paul, for instance, on a level with that of his Master. The scribe theory of inspiration is losing ground even among those who held it most rigidly. It is felt to be as unfounded an assumption as the rival attempt to define the infallibility of the Church by assigning it to the Pope speaking *ex cathedrâ* and as its visible head. When the Romanist has got his dogma of an Infallible Church he does not know what to do with it, since, if the Church is infallibly right, then of course all argument falls to the ground, and it is an idle attempt to prove or to disprove the truth of any of its dogmas. It is equally a case of reasoning in a circle of vicious assumption with those who set up the dogma of an infallible book, and make it their point of departure. It is idle in that case to attempt to commend its truths to every man's conscience. In the one case, an infallible Church has not to produce her reasons, but simply to say *Roma locuta est*, and the question is finished. It is equally so in the other case, when the book is said to be its own warrant and to admit no appeal to any court, such as that of conscience.

For these reasons in brief, we set aside the dogma of Book Inspiration. It assumes, as we have seen, certain psychological inquiries into the mode of action of the Divine Spirit on the minds of those to whom a revelation in the first instance came. It is enough for us that holy men of old spake as they were moved, and so, as a matter of fact, were recipients of the lively oracles. We, on our part, are led to believe any truth of the Bible, not merely because it is found in the Bible, but because it is felt

to be true on its own proper grounds of evidence as seen in the light of conscience.

The ultimate court of appeal must ever be the conscience, and though conscience and the Bible need not, and never do really conflict, yet when we come to deal with the question of our true grounds of belief, the new school theologian says he is bound to put conscience first, since, if he sets it aside, he takes away the very foundations which supports his faith in the Bible. The fallacy of the old school was to make the Bible its own witness, and thus to vitiate one of the first laws of evidence which Christ Himself submitted to: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true."

Assuming then a revelation as vouched for by prophecy and miracle, the three branches of Theology on which the new differs from the old are Theology proper, or our conception of the character of God; Soteriology, or the plan of redemption; and Eschatology, or the ultimate triumph of good over evil. On all these three branches of truth, the differences between the old and the new will be seen to be serious and far-reaching. With regard to the first of the three, or Theology proper, it is here that the contrast is most marked. It is not too much to say that our conceptions of God's character have undergone a silent revolution during the last fifty years. This will seem a hard saying to many, since we should be ready to say beforehand that the consideration of what God is in Himself was the one branch of Theology upon which no fresh light could break in from without. Are we to be told that we must borrow, as Israel did from the Egyptians, jewels of gold and silver; or that the modern humanitarian views of criminal jurisprudence are to suggest any deeper conceptions of the Divine character than those which were the support of God's people in past ages?

To this objection we can only reply that it is so. There are truths which lay on the surface of Scripture, and yet though "he who runs may read" them, it appears as if they were passed by. The relation of God to men as the Father of spirits is one of these truths which, in a sense, we may describe as the fellowship of the mystery which in other ages was not made known to the Church of the past; nor need we be surprised at this. It is a truth of such far-reaching and almost revolutionary bearing on our relation to others, as well as of such transcendent importance in our relation to God,—it carries with it consequences so vast, and lifts the mind, as the new astronomy did, into a new world-centre; and, lastly, it upsets so many of our firmest prepossessions, that it is easy to see why the Fatherhood of God lay like a barren and neglected truth. This is not a solitary instance of what Bishop Butler long ago noticed, that truths in revelation, like discoveries in science, may have to wait for ages till the discoverer arises. The mystery that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body in Christ, was implied in passage after passage of the Old Testament prophets—yet none could see it, till it was seen in the light of the accomplished fact. Even the chosen Twelve were slow to recognise this truth in all its breadth and bearing on the future, till it was given to the Apostle of the Gentiles to make all men know what was the fellowship of this mystery. Hence it is, that instead of feeling any surprise that it should have lain hidden so long, we should rather rejoice that to us, in these days, it is given to see that "covering that is cast over all nations" removed. The Fatherhood of God is no longer a barren truism, such as it was when "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord" were alike regarded during the age of Deism as epithets of the All-Father. We mean something much more definite when we speak

of the general Fatherhood of God than the phrase of Pope's universal prayer—

> "Father of all, in every age,
> In every clime adored,
> By saint, by savage, or by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord."

The teaching of the new Theology is more definite; and, let us add, it is founded on spiritual convictions quite as clear cut as those of the old Particularism which it is intended to replace.

Besides, it is important to see that, since man is made in the image of God, any deeper knowledge which we attain to of our own constitution must lead to deeper discovery of the true character of God. The psychology of Scripture is a clue to its Theology; and by this light we are led to explore Scripture afresh, and so to rise out of the old Theology, whose keynote is creation up to emanation, which is the keynote of the new Theology. A distinct spiritual faculty in man, sometimes vaguely described as "God-consciousness," seems to assume as its basis a certain peculiar relationship of man to God, beyond that of creaturely dependence. This deeper and tenderer relationship is only to be described by one term, which is sonship. This sonship is, as we hold, an inalienable birthright of all, it is inherent in our descent from the first Adam; and however it waits for the spirit of adoption by union with the second Adam to enable us to realize it as a privilege, it may be said to be dormant in all, but not extinct. This is the very ground and sufficient reason for the incarnation, on which the new Theology rests its belief in that mystery. The old Theology reversed the order in which it viewed the incarnation. This doctrine was first in order of time, but second in logical importance to the atonement, as we see in the

celebrated treatise of Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, in which he argues for the necessity of the incarnation to give worth to the atonement. The new school, in opposition to this mode of viewing the question, rightly or wrongly tries to carry the question one stage farther back, and to see the ground of the incarnation in the original constitution of man as made in God's image and after His likeness. Hence it is that redemption is in their view of the divine dealings no mere afterthought. It is more than a merely remedial provision. It is part of the eternal purpose of God, by which He planned to gather up all in Christ.

So it is that Theology proper, or the doctrine of the character of God, will have to be treated afresh, when we make the Fatherhood of God our point of departure and not merely His sovereignty, or His absolute decrees, as the old school habitually did. If man is made in the image of God, then we can see how our conceptions of the All-Merciful or the All-Wise become clarified, in proportion as we pass out from an age of barbarism and rise to the conception of the general reign of law, not in nature only, but also in man's relation to God. Here let us add as a caution, that we must not be led away with the fallacy that because God's character in itself changes not, consequently our conceptions of the divine character do not need to undergo any change with the ages. And yet this transparent fallacy is the explanation of one of the most rooted errors of divines, who hold that Theology is a constant and not a variant body of truth, because its subject is the Being of Him who changes not. We might as well argue because the sun is the same king of day that shone on the Greeks, who thought it to be only a ball of fire not larger than the Peloponnesus, that our conceptions of the sun are the same as theirs. Why are we to say that progress is the

law of life in all other directions, but that in Theology alone we are to fall back on the *sapientia veterum* argument? No great improvement in jurisprudence was ever made until jurists like Beccaria dared to face the dogma that our administration of justice must be the same from age to age, because the primitive instinct, on which the conception of justice rests, is the same in all ages. It was his saying, that "the story of human progress presents to us the picture of a vast sea of error, in which only a few in confusion, and at a distance from each other, emerge to the surface of truth." This is as true of Theology as of Law. We can bear to hear then without surprise, that the Fatherhood of God was the treasure hid in the field, which some men in our day have found, and for joy have sold all that they before knew of the gospel, in order to possess it. It is to them a new gospel, as much as when Berridge on his conversion declared, that it seemed to him as if the Bible, which he had read all his life, had been lifted off the table, and a new one laid down in its place. Such is our altered point of view when we look at a central truth, that it is not easy to recognise that it is any longer the same truth. Mont Blanc, as seen from the valley of Aosta, is so unlike the Mont Blanc which the ruck of tourists see only from Chamounix, that it is difficult to believe that we are looking at the same mountain at all. Instead of a dome there is now a peak in view; and the shoulders and supports of the mountain are so changed, that for all purposes of the sightseer it is a new mountain. So it is with Theology, when the Fatherhood of God is made the distinct point of departure, and not a mere inference from His redemptive work.

The second branch of our subject on which the new Theology diverges from the old is Soteriology, or redemption from sin as a whole. It is easy to see where the line

of cleavage occurs between the old and the new. In the old Theology the ground taken up was that nature had undergone such a disruption by the Fall that redemption was equivalent to a new creation. Pelagianism being regarded on all sides as the *fons et origo* of all error on the redemptive scheme, to push anti-Pelagianism to the farthest point was to emphasize as it was said the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. The evangelical "Three R's," as they have been called, "Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration," were laid such stress on, that in their blind zeal divines sometimes failed to see that they were cutting away the very supports of theology by impairing man's responsibility. Luther, in his passionate way, replied to Erasmus and laid down a counter theory of his own which he styled *de servo arbitrio ;* and though Melanchthon came to the rescue and qualified the doctrine of his chief in this headlong and sudden attack on the doctrine of "merit," it cannot be said that Melanchthon's compromise helped to clear up the confusion on the subject. On the contrary, like Baxter a century later, his attempted syncretism only made confusion worse confounded. It threw on men all the responsibility for the evil in life, while all the good was of God. The high Calvinists were at least more consistent than this, since they got rid altogether of the statement that life was a state of probation. They did not tantalize men who were a *massa perditionis* with offers of mercy which were only efficaciously procured for the elect.

The new Theology, then, differs from the old in its mode of approaching this subject of redemption. It does not set out with two such contradictory statements as the utter ruin of man by the Fall combined with such responsibility as leaves him in a state of probation, free as it is said to do evil, but not free to do good. We may leave

divines of the old school to reconcile such contradictions by a quibbling distinction between inability and disability, as if by this device of transferring the defect from the intellect to the will, we could clear God from the appearance of being in some sense the author of evil. Such are only a few of the pitfalls which the old Theology dug for itself by pressing too far the contrast between nature and grace. We forget that Augustinian theology, as it was in the case of its author, was a recoil from Manichæanism, and so it easily falls back into the "hole whence it was dug." To exaggerate grace at the expense of nature is quite as dangerous as to exalt nature to the point that it can dispense with grace. Later Augustinians like Pascal have seen this and denounced, as he has done in a memorable passage, the mistake of letting man know his dignity apart from his baseness, or his baseness apart from his dignity. But the prevailing mistake of Theology has generally been of leaning, as if from fear of error, in the direction of what is indulgently called the mistake on the right side. Hence it is that Pelagianism has been cast out as a heresy, and the counter doctrine of grace, whether through the sacraments as by one school, or through conversion as by another school, has been set up as the one aspect of truth which is orthodox. The result has been a rejection of the doctrines of grace on the part of philosophic minds in general, under the impression of their latent but scarce suspected tendency towards Manichæanism, and also because these doctrines are supposed to undermine the foundations of morality. Swedenborg went a step farther, and because he was unable to distinguish between the dead Lutheranism of his day and the Pauline doctrine from which he supposed it to be derived in direct descent, he went so far as to reject Paulinism altogether, and to assert that he was a false

apostle. With a kind of Dantesque ferocity he had a vision of the great apostle, whom he supposed he saw deep down in the nethermost hell of his diseased brain. But these *ægri somnia*, these freaks of a diseased fancy, at least point to some serious error in the popular theology which must be set right before the age can return to the doctrines of grace, and receive a gospel which is no good news at all under the top load of harsh predestinarianism with which it has been weighed down. The whole scheme of salvation, or the plan of redemption as it is called, must be presented afresh. Our Soteriology like our Theology proper must be revised, and the clue to the former is to be found in our right apprehension of the latter.

Setting out as we do with the Fatherhood of God as the "ruling idea" of our Theology, all flows out of this deductively, since if it is a science at all Theology must be deductive. Our objection to the old school is not to their "logic in theology," such as Isaac Taylor found fault with, but to the assumptions themselves from which their logic set out and then drew its conclusions by processes of reasoning quite unimpeachable. Granted their premises, we have no complaint to make of the remorseless vigour with which they went on to the bitter end. On the contrary, the most merciless divines are those whom we feel most respect for. Jonathan Edwards, *ultimus Augustinorum*, as we may call him, undoubtedly must be admitted to have provoked the reaction and so have given birth to the new Theology. On this account alone his name should be held in honour even by those who regard his Deity as little better than that cloud-compelling Zeus against whom Prometheus-Vinctus utters his vain laments.

With the Fatherhood of God for our lode-star and man's inalienable sonship as our base line, Redemption now becomes a measurable truth, and not a kind of mystery at which we alternately despair and wonder. If man be the son of God, and above all a lost son, then that the Son of man should come to seek and to save that which is lost is consistent alike with the character of God which is loving and pitiful, and also with the spiritual needs of man, which craves for communion with God as the eye does for light or a plant for the sun. Hence it is that the new Theology, unlike the old, sees the atonement in the light of the incarnation, not in the reverse order. There is a "reverence of reason," which will ask for the moving why of this manifestation of God's love; and so, when we attempt to give what Leibnitz would call its "sufficient reason," we are led to trace it to the original constitution of man as made in the image of God. Soteriology thus grows out of Theology proper, and this one postulate of the Fatherhood of God sets before us the work of redemption in a light which has this unerring mark of its truth, viz., simplicity and self-consistency.

We now turn to the last and most important of the contrasts between the old Theology and the new. This is Eschatology, or the doctrine not so much of "last things" or "latter days," on which many too often prophesy out of their own fancy as of the "larger hope," which is a fit subject of contemplation to every serious mind, "What can I know?" "What should I do?" "What am I to hope for?" These, according to Kant, are the only three categories on which the human mind can ask questions and can expect an answer to. Knowledge, duty, and our hopes of a hereafter, the three are so linked together that a revelation which professed to give some knowledge of the being and perfections of God, and to lay down what are our

duties towards Him, and there broke off, would be worse than deceptive. The old Theology does not shrink from producing a scheme of the hereafter, and it does so in severe and strict consistency with its postulates. Christ has come, as the old school teaches, to procure or rather to purchase eternal life for all those that believe, whether as elect of God or as the elect of their own will, it matters not, as on the question of this limitation to salvation by faith alone the two subsections of the old school of Theology are agreed. What follows from this limitation of Christ's redemptive work, whether we set up the bar in our will or in God's desires? In either case it follows that for those outside this pale there remains nothing but the blackness of darkness. Some divines, it is true, hint at what are called "uncovenanted mercies," and Tillotson and his school threw out the caution that God was pledged by His own perfections to carry out His promises, but not pledged to carry out His threatenings. Here divines of the orthodox type who had leanings to the larger hope fell back on the Kantian distinction of a speculative and regulative knowledge of God. We were told with great pomp of phrase that our knowledge of God's purposes was regulative only, and that we were to govern our conduct as if certain terrible consequences might follow in case we did not believe. Even Bishop Butler, most serious of thinkers, is not above this attempt to lure men on into faith by an appeal to a vague fear of the bare possibility of an infinite loss. The old believers in the old dogma of a never-ending punishment were more consistent than these Latitude men of last century. They at least held by the old terrorism, and used it as a kind of scourge to "whip the offending Adam" out of those who lingered like Lot on the brink of the city of Destruction.

But the men of the mediation school, who have set up various kinds of compromise, as all thoughtful divines have been doing for the last two centuries, for lack of a spiritual psychology have found refuge in silence, as they had no counter conviction with which to meet those who held the old dogmas. They have held aloof from the discussion and practised a judicious reserve on Eschatology. The consequence of this timidity, arising too often from want of spiritual insight, is that in the long run they have only made the unbelief which they now vainly desire to stem. For what has followed? The field of Theology, being handed over in too many cases to a class of half-educated dogmatists whose crude literalism is not relieved by a single ray of light from the higher criticism, the impression has spread among intelligent laymen that divines practise a kind of reserve and use creeds as theological passwords. Can we wonder that as the result of this suspicion educated men have left theology on one side as a subject too forbidding to be touched on? As it is infidelity to question reigning dogmas, they resign themselves to a kind of Hobbist conformity for the sake of the weaker vessels of society. As for their own real beliefs, they hold with the celebrated author of the *Characteristics*, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, that the true religion is that which all men of sense are agreed on, only they take care not to say what that is. We all know what that means, and therefore hold that the only remedy lies in a restoration of belief by removing the dead wood of old dogma and putting living fibre in its place.

The Eschatology, then, of the Church of the future must be a doctrine which reconciles us to its righteousness. We must have the courage to look traditional opinions in the face and not be deterred by the plea of

sincere but narrow-minded Pietists, that we are unsettling the foundations of their faith. We must arraign the old doctrine of last things before the court of conscience, and there test it, as we do all truths of Theology, by its commending itself to men's conscience *in God's sight.* This last expression is an important qualification, since conscience is at best a primary, but not a final court of appeal. When we so cross-question conscience, it gives up the two following verdicts: that evil unless infinite, which is an absurdity in a finite agent, must be dealt with both retributively and remedially. The latter must supplement the former. The Platonic dogma is that "all punishment is remedial;" but this is one-sided, or at least only a half truth—for punishment can only become remedial when it does not renounce its root idea, which is retribution. The conscience cries out for some Nemesis either here or hereafter; and the fact that Nemesis too often seems to miss its mark here, is the strong support in the popular mind for retribution in the world of spirits. Hence it is that heavens and hells enter into and form a leading feature in all religions, not so much because these beliefs are the inventions of priests in order to support their priestcraft. This was the eighteenth century account of the matter. In our day we see that the reverse is the true state of the case. Priests may be induced to make up mythical heavens and hells, but it is so because the common conscience of men demands it of them. There is a deep desire, amounting in the case of crime to an unquenchable thirst, for compensation hereafter. Men who are oppressed with the burden of life, long for something to redress the inequalities of the present life. They desire to reach a place, in the pathetic words of Job, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary

are at rest." The worst that can be said of priests with regard to the popular hells and heavens is that their sin has been that of cowardice. It was the people who brought their earrings of gold to Aaron: the priest only made the mould into which the molten metal flowed of itself. In a word, the fire and the gold came from the people, the fixed form into which the belief was moulded was prepared for it by the priest. To this extent, and not for the entire belief in retribution hereafter, is priestcraft responsible.

What the new Theology, then, has to do with regard to Eschatology, is to take the molten image back, re-melt it, and then re-shape it in a form which, instead of contradicting, shall confirm our spiritual instincts. Any doctrine of future punishment which is to commend itself to a humanitarian age like ours must have these two characteristics: it must be retributive and remedial; also, the one must pass into the other. In an age only emerging from semi-barbarism, when society stood like the poet on a bridge of sighs, "a palace and a prison on each hand," it scarcely shocked the popular conscience to meet with the same lights and shades in the divine government which met them every day in secular life, and which nowhere were so sharply-marked as in Venice. In the great hall of the Doge's palace, Tintoretto's canvas of the plains of heaven covers the wall from side to side. A few feet across a narrow canal, the visitor is plunged into dungeons so deep and dark, that the wonder is, not that prisoners ever lived to come out and tell the tale of horrors, which was seldom the case, but that they could exist even for a few days walled into cells where they could neither lie down nor stand, but could only crouch and cower in cold and darkness. These contrasts shock the conscience and revolt the humanity of our

age; it was otherwise three centuries ago. Divines have to remember this, or they will learn when too late that a reformed jurisprudence will not allow us to put up any longer with an unreformed Theology. The popular Theology is tardily making certain concessions, and is working on towards a compromise such as that of the Conditional Immortality School, which is ready to admit that the old Cartesian dogma of the natural immortality of the rational soul is as good as dead, while the new doctrine of life in Christ is not yet fully embraced in all its bearings on the future. This is the explanation of much of the popular scepticism of our day, which finds itself forlorn, as one of its own poets has said—

"Betwixt two worlds—one dead, one powerless to be born."

The new Eschatology, then, if it is to be abreast of the age, must reflect its best and deepest convictions as to the highest wisdom and the highest love. Justice and mercy are often so handled by divines as if God's ways were unequal because ours are. Our very language on the divine attributes is often tainted by human imperfection. We sometimes speak of mercy as tempering justice, and the phrase implies that such is our limitation of character that we are compelled to do one wrong in order to repair another. Even in Theology such phrases have stolen in; and preachers will sometimes speak of the "merits" of Christ as if they had the effect of inducing God to lay aside the sword of justice. Is it strange that divines, who thus bring themselves to think of God as a "man to repent," should go on to hold a doctrine of indulgence "for the penal consequences of sin"? One error thus makes way for another. The divines who dug one pit which they called Hell, dug another which they called Purgatory. The Reformers stepped in and closed

up one pit, after shooting into it whole cart-loads of mediæval rubbish—the doctrine of indulgences and masses for souls, on which the priesthood made a trade until Luther knocked a hole in Tetzel's drum. But the Reformers did not go on to deal with the mediæval Inferno as they had dealt with the Purgatorio. What the former means, we have only to judge by such a doleful book as Boston's *Fourfold State,* which some religious societies still print and circulate.

On this subject of Eschatology the caution of educated divines of the orthodox type has been carried too far. It has taught us the lesson that *suppressio veri* is the next step to *suggestio falsi.* Thoughtful men of the Bishop Butler type argue that since the whole subject is veiled in mystery, and they have no counter dogma to set up against the popular Theology, they had better be silent. This is an interim position, and fair as far as it goes, but it fails as the *Interim* offered by Charles V. and accepted by the Reformers in 1535, when it was found to be kept in a one-sided way. Hence the popular saying, "The devil is in the interim." If both sides would drop their arms, and leave the whole question of the hereafter and of retribution as it is left in the solemn shade of reserve in which the Old Testament regards it, this perhaps would be the best attitude in regard to the question—Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? This suspense of judgment before the time would be an honest and even-handed interim. But single texts of the New Testament, and particularly of the Apocalypse, torn out of their connection, and mangled in order to fit into our dogmatic Theology, this is the Eschatology which has to be removed, and it is almost as great a task to pull down the ruins of the old fabric as it is to lay the foundations of the new.

All we can say in conclusion is that there are many builders willing to work, and a growing number of lay minds who do not despair in the not distant future of seeing a Theology arise which shall be worthy of that future. The agnostic, and the dogmatic divine who clings to a petrifaction which he calls orthodox Theology, are acting together, though they little suspect it, and in a kind of informal alliance. Both agree in despairing of any Theology of the future; the one because he holds that the problem is insoluble, the other because, as he holds, it has been already solved once for all. The answer to both is the same, that the restlessness of the age proclaims that man cannot live by bread alone, as the Secularists and Agnostics hold, or on the "old loaves and musty" which these theological Gibeonites hold out to them. What the age craves for is bread from heaven, and bread, moreover, which is fresh-baked, and not turned to stone like the lava-covered relics of the bakers' shops of Pompeii, still to be seen in the museum of Naples. The last charge of the late Archbishop of Canterbury bore the suggestive, and for Theology unfamiliar, title of "the Church of the future." The phrase was one which theological circles are too little familiar with. It at least gave the impression that the good archbishop was one of that small, but let us hope increasing, class of divines who see before and not merely into the past. There are men whose eyes are apparently so set in their heads as those of such timid animals as the hare and the horse, and who are adapted to see behind better than before. Too long has this been the temper of Theology, until the secular mind has taken Theology at its word, and left it to a class of ecclesiologists, the Old Mortalities who live to rub brasses and correct palimpsests. The undertone of contempt which the Macaulays and Buckles of litera-

ture have adopted, would not have made the impression which it has if the temper of Theology had not been as reactionary as it is. For this the only remedy is a bold assertion of some counter position—an assertion which will shock the conventional, and call out sharp criticism from the educated class of critics who affect some fashionable archaism in Theology. It is a fashion of the age, but a passing one, to sentimentalize over patristic Theology. It is one of the affectations of our day, which the theological æsthete of young Oxford indulges in. He girds at Protestantism as a form of Philistinism. A certain archaic flavour of the past without narrowness, this is his ideal. How to pour into the rigid Anglican mould of the far past the large and liberal thoughts of the near future—this is the feat of the Broad High School, which but for Hegel, that master of ambidextrous word-juggling, would be simply impossible. It is better to deal frankly with this unnatural and even Mezentian union of dead and living. It is enough to leave the dead to bury their dead. Historical continuity is to be carried out, if possible, in doctrine as well as discipline; but this will be secured quite as well by those who say out plainly that a new age calls for a new Theology, as by those who shudder at the very thought of re-dressing old truths in new forms. Are men to learn only after defeat the lesson of the defeated and dying King Arthur?

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

It seems that it is so. The majority are fools, in the sense that any man is a fool who is only wise after the event. In the old legend, those who refused to take Prometheus for their guide had to put up with the peevish reproaches of that old dotard Epimetheus. We

should despair of Theology if we were to judge by the temper of the oracles of the religious world and of what is called Church opinion in our island. Happily, in America the dead hand, whether of endowment or apostolical succession doctrine, as it is called, does not weigh "heavy as frost and deep almost as life." The result is that as, in the colonial stage of their history, English home-grown Puritanism passed into hyper-Calvinism, so it passed on through Unitarianism into the new Transcendentalism which is at present the reigning Theology of New England. But at last there are signs of a return in many cases to the old paths, and a revival of something like orthodoxy. This movement, which is represented by preachers of note like Bishop Huntingdon and Philips Brooks, is one which we can heartily sympathize with. It has gone so far as to draw up the outlines of the new Theology, and some of its contrasts with the old. This has been very successfully drawn up for the general reader in a few pages of introduction to his sermons by the Rev. Theodore Munger. The new Theology seems to be gathering itself up into a systematic whole in the voluminous writings of the late Horace Bushnell, the Rev. Newman Smith, and others too numerous to mention. To gather these scattered rays into a focus, such is the task of the present writer. It is when the general desire is felt, and a breath of the *Zeit Geist* seems to fill our sails, that we launch out on the daring enterprise of revising Theology, bringing it into harmony with the "ruling ideas" of our day. If it fails, as it may do, no other reputation but that of the writer is staked. It is a private venture, and if, like the merchant adventurers of the heroic age of England, we go out to explore and remain to conquer and civilise, we shall only have done what they did who sailed Westward Ho, and on their

way to reach the old Continent discovered a new. So it is that past and future are linked together. In any case, our allegiance to truth compels us to say that the day of compromise is over, and that a spiritual religion must reconcile herself with scientific truth, or else close in a deadly duel in which one or both must perish. In the last place, we are encouraged to go on by the word of our Master, that truth must ever be militant here on earth. From henceforth the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

CHAPTER I.

RULING IDEAS IN THEOLOGY.

THEOLOGY may be defined as the science of inferences deduced from a revelation of God's will to men. Its exactness as a science accordingly depends on the care and correctness with which these inferences are drawn from the fountain of truth in the lively oracles. To assume that this has been correctly done once for all by antiquity, and that little more remains for us to do than to pick out whatever comes to our hand out of that huge drag-net of antiquity, patristic or scholastic, this is dogmatism in its extremest form. There are many milder varieties of the same tendency, but partly from indolence, principally from fear of change, only a few have the courage to challenge this method of authority. Few are bold enough to admit that these inferences were in many cases wrongly drawn, or were at best only partial approximations to a great and primitive verity. We must begin over again, and with a new Organon of criticism draw up a fresh list of inferences. It is to be regretted that, with biblical criticism advancing every day, the new hermeneutics are not yielding up as they should a new Theology. Divines are content with stereotyped phrases. They speak of the Fall, the Atonement, the Final Judgment, for instance, as if all were agreed to accept these terms as the expressions of some *fact*, instead of their being only obscure infer-

ences from a few obscure passages of an old Book, at best but imperfectly understood. This is the dogmatic method, unhappily not out of date, and its root lies in the Realism which still infests Theology. If such phrases as the Church, or the Atonement, or the Fall are, properly speaking, only mental conceptions, varying with each age, and at every moment even in the same age, we cheat ourselves with words when we try

> "To draw down a cloud, and in it
> To catch the changing Cynthia of the minute."

This is what Theology has been doing from the beginning, in complete oblivion of the fallacy that mental concepts are not *entia realia*. The Nominalism of the Schoolmen, which was only Protestantism in its incipient struggles against Church authority, saw and dimly suspected this, but it was powerless to discern the remedy. We have, in our day, to get beyond scholastic Nominalism. We have to call in sound exegesis to point out on what a slender basis, even of biblical authority, much of our dogmatic Theology rests. To make out a fresh set of inferences, drawn direct from the fountain-head, from Scripture, entirely discarding the old, this would seem presumptuous, and perhaps would end in driving out one type of dogmatism by another. It is not in this way that the error is to be combated, but by the simpler but surer method of pointing out what are the reigning ideas of our age, and how far our inferences from the New Testament may be brought into harmony with them. The late Professor Mozley wrote an apology for the Old Testament on the only lines which we think are legitimate, and which an age like ours will accept. He pointed out that as our moral conceptions were subject to the same law of progress as our intellectual, it was con-

ceivable that a certain class of actions might be excusable, and even right, in one age and under one covenant, which would be inexcusable under another. The sacrifice of Isaac, for instance, can only be explained to our moral sense by reference to one of the reigning ideas of the early world, the *patria potestas* of which we have only a kind of bare survival in what we call fatherly authority. Not to enumerate other instances of the same thing, we may conclude that every revelation of God is more or less of an accommodation. As the narrative of Creation and the story of the Fall are described in terms abreast of the intelligence of the age to which they were given, so it is throughout. These "reigning ideas," as Professor Mozley aptly describes them, are the key to explain that what seems to us to be non-moral or even immoral actions, are apparently sanctioned by Jehovah in the Old Testament.

We have only to extend this thought of "reigning ideas" into the region of New Testament criticism in order to account for the Theology of one age seeming immoral, or at least non-moral, to another age. Doctrines of the Atonement, for instance, based on a forensic fiction of the transfer of guilt which did not seem to a primitive age to be repulsive to our moral instincts, are felt to be highly so to ours. The reason, of course, is that our juridical conceptions under the general humanitarian movement of the age have enlarged and widened. Instead of regarding guilt as gelt, as our Saxon forefathers did when the blood-money of a thegn, a franklin, and a churl were all assessed at different sums, we have reached a stage in which crime is a conception distinct from that of a mere tort or personal wrong, for which a money compensation can be given. Sir H. Maine points out, in his *Lectures on Ancient Law*, that the penal law of ancient communities is not a law of crimes. The person injured proceeds

against the wrong-doer by ordinary civil action, and receives compensation in the shape of money damages. In the infancy of jurisprudence, as he elsewhere observes, a citizen depends for protection, not on the law of crime, but of torts. He thus traces three stages through which jurisprudence passes in primitive society, which may be marked by the terms "Sins," "Torts," "Crimes." The conception of offence against God produced the first class of ordinances, the conception of offences against our neighbours the second; but, he adds, the idea of offences against the State or aggregate community did not exist at all in primitive society, and hence it did not at first produce any criminal jurisprudence in the modern sense of the term.

It is easy, then, to gather from these remarks that advancing ideas in jurisprudence call for a revision of our theological concepts. It is a misfortune that Theology as a whole has been studied and taught by a professional class apart, to whom history, science, and jurisprudence have only been taught incidentally, and as throwing at best only a side light on Theology proper. As a rule, divines have little or no conception, for instance, of this important truth, which is the keynote to the philosophy of history, that all progress is co-ordinate. The consequence of this is, that a barbarous age must have a barbarous jurisprudence, and consequently a barbarous Theology. We must see and admit that culture in one direction presupposes culture in every other. The dogma, for instance, of Transubstantiation, or which comes to the same thing, of the Corporal Presence in the elements, instead of striking the Christian consciousness of the tenth century as an absurdity, *ex vi terminis*, was so entirely in harmony with the rise of one of its scientific conceptions, viz. the transmutation of metals, that it was little more than the translation of bad science into terms of bad Theology. It was, to use

Professor Mozley's terminology, the application to Theology of one of the "reigning ideas" of the age in chemistry, then known only as alchemy, magic, or the black art. The divines of that day, to do them justice, only reasoned then as Rowland Hill once did about music, and asked why the devil should have all the good tunes. A raid into his domains to carry off a new miracle, rightly called Transubstantiation, was only a pious work in an age when stealing old bones from one shrine for the profit of another and rival holy place was regarded by monks as a pious fraud. To a later age all this seems immoral; and the modern mind echoes the remark of C. J. Fox, that he could see the fraud but not the piety of these pious frauds. But other ages had their own standards of morality as well as ours, morality being nowhere the immutable thing which some students of ethics, who shut the page of history, suppose it to be.

Theology, then, has its phases like other truths, and it is only to be studied scientifically with reference to this phrase of the reigning ideas of the age under which it has grown up. If we were to study Theology historically, we should say that it has passed through a juridical or Roman stage, in which classical conceptions of law formulated the Theology of the Patristic period. This extends, roughly speaking, from Constantine to Charlemagne, and in this, if we may name one divine, Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was the formative mind of the systematic Theology of that age. The second period, the scholastic, extends from the eighth to the sixteenth century. It is the *sæculum scholasticum* of which Aquinas is the angelic doctor, as Augustine was of the age preceding. The third age, which carries us over three centuries, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, is the age, as we may describe it, of a new scholasticism under the alternate

but opposing sceptres of Calvin and Luther. Other Reformers, as Zwingli, Knox, and Cranmer, were local in their range of teaching, and their Theology accordingly has a certain provincial and insular note which is wanting in the teaching of the Saxon monk who shook the world, and of the French scholar who found an asylum in a free city, placed in a kind of angle between France and Italy and Germany, and who, from that point of vantage, for a century or more, governed the world as a new Pope over a new Rome.

Theology, in a word, if she is to make good her claim of being the queen of sciences, can only do so by a two-fold process. She must lay all other sciences under contribution to her, and she must also as well reflect every truth borne in on her in all directions. She must be as London is, the mart and exchange of the world. It must be a case of free trade on both sides, and no mere reciprocity with a balance of trade in the background. If she thus freely gives and takes and acts on the Roman rule, *quisquis es noster eris*, she may yet recover her lost ground. As it is, Theology, on account of the subject being sacred, is treated as if it were sacred ground. It is exempt from the law of change, and the condition that it lends and borrows from other sciences. Divines are not willing to allow that the Theology of any age has owed much to the juridical conceptions of that age, and hence that a doctrine of the Atonement may seem immoral to one age which was not so to another. In the same way, the crude and magical conception of Transubstantiation, which revolts our age, instead of revolting, seemed highly reasonable to the age which coined that phrase, as the outcome of its scholastic philosophy. The ignorant outcry against Dr. Hampden for stating what seems to us such a truism as the dependence of Theology for its technical terms and

dogmatic framework on the reigning philosophies of the age in which it grew, is a test of what the divine thinks to this day on this subject. He resents the remark that the Lutheran dogma of forensic imputation is a concept of old-world jurisprudence, which was indifferent law when first taught, but which is neither law nor justice to the ideas of our age. So with Calvin's dogma of sovereignty, out of which the whole scheme of federal Theology has been built up, logically enough if that is logic at all which is pure deduction from an unproved assumption. It fell in well enough with the reigning ideas of the age in which it grew, and which it fitted into. It was not then, as it is now, a dead formula, since this mental concept of a mighty Allah, whose will was resistless and whose word was the law of the universe, could nerve men like William the Silent and Oliver the Protector to face peril and fight for what they held to be the cause of God against fearful odds. This was the grand side of Calvinism; and where it is held even as a survival, as it is held by such soldiers as Havelock and Gordon, we can judge what the root of such faith is from its fruits.

To lay down, then, on what lines the new Theology should be drawn up, we must ascertain what are the reigning ideas of the age we live in, and then decide whether Theology will admit of such an accommodation. Clearly all will admit that there are some types of philosophical thought to which any Theology deserving the name must be opposed. In such a case we can only conclude that, if these ideas are true, then Theology, even under its broadest aspect, is a doctrine only of the past, and with no future. The Comtists have reasoned rightly enough from their assumptions, and equally so Strauss has argued in his last despairing plunge into blank negation, that the notions scientific and ecclesiastical are absolutely

incompatible with each other, and that only the so-called pure science, which starts without presuppositions of any kind, deserves the name of science.[1] Clearly here is a type of thought with which we can hold no terms. To borrow Bacon's metaphor, this is the Egyptian whom Moses must slay, not the Israelite who is to be set at one with his brother. But the reigning ideas of our age, which Theology must reconcile itself with or become obsolete, are those inferences from God's plan of the universe which a wider and deeper survey of science has forced on our attention. We have learned to measure time not by solar revolutions only, but by epochs of creation. A new geology has added to a new astronomy conceptions of time and space which even to a Leibnitz or a Newton would have seemed as blank drafts on our credulity. The sum-total of these extensions of the geologic scale of life, and the increase of creative days from six to a series practically infinite, amounts to this, that we are forced to use a new phrase foreign to the old Theology, which rests on creationism pure and simple. We now speak of evolution; and divines, who a few years ago would have shuddered at the phrase, now complacently see Charles Darwin laid in the abbey hard by Isaac Newton, and regarded as the Newton of the nineteenth century. All the while, Theology seeks to use the old phrases, or feebly tries to piece together the old and the new garment, and to put the new wine of evolution into the old wine skins of creationism. In this direction Theology must take a new departure, and modify its terms to express new conceptions of the universe. Again, on the subject of "sovereignty," as the underlying conception of the Divine Personality, Theology has undergone a silent revolution. We have now to

[1] *Vid.* Martensen's *Dogmatik*, Introduction.

face a new order of conceptions of spiritual truth. It is assumed, we know, by many that the Fatherhood of God may be easily reconciled with His character as Governor. They see no contrast between the two; and we admit that the reconciliation is easy, if, as Englishmen who pride themselves on being practical, we do not go far with either. If we keep close to the shore, and never sail beyond the shoals of Theology, we can easily do this; but if we launch out as the old Calvinists, who were more logical and consistent, did, into the great deep of God's councils, then Sovereignty becomes the keynote of a Theology quite irreconcilable with the Divine Fatherhood. Here the old and the new Theology join issue, and it is clear to any logical mind that the truth of the one implies the error of the other. Unless we are to drift into scepticism, and Theology in despair is to throw up the task of reconciling the higher thought of the age to its teaching, we must make a bold *volte-face* in Theology, and make a clean sweep of the past with regard to all that is currently taught in federal Theology. The whole of what were known as the five points of that Theology, and which reached the last stage of definiteness in the Synod of Dort, are now past criticism. It is not so much that men disagree with this mode of thinking, as that they pass it by as obsolete. Mr. Lecky pointed out that popular errors, based on theological explanations of scientific facts, are not disproved, but lived down. The demonology of the seventeenth century died down in the light of common day, which the eighteenth century began to pour on such conceptions. Sir Thomas Browne, for instance, taught that to disbelieve in witchcraft was to disbelieve in spirits, which was only blank Atheism. But a few years brought a change. John Wesley, for instance,

began life as a devout believer in ghosts and apparitions. He lived on into the last years of a century which had parted company with these conceptions, not so much because they were proved to be false, as because they were felt to be irrelevant. Black's discovery of the nature of gases laid more ghosts than all the arguments of divines for or against the reasonableness of these modern miracles. In the same way, the Calvinistic Theology of the seventeenth century has passed out of view, not so much because disproved as unproved. It was seen to be logical enough in itself. Once admit its fundamental postulates in the conception of a Being who is Almighty Will, and whose goodness and love are only the mode of action of one who is a law to himself, and the result is that logically compact chain of five links, beginning in arbitrary predestination and ending in an ultimate salvation of some and a damnation of others equally arbitrary. It is no use, as divines do who call themselves "moderate," to admit the postulates, and then to kick at the conclusions which irresistibly grow out of those conceptions which the Calvinist sets out with. The only thoroughgoing method is to go back to these postulates, and to question their validity as assumptions. We must test the foundations of so high a house as that which deductive Theology has presumed to rear. Unless Theology belies its very name, it must be the science of God. The character of God in itself, and not merely His dealings with the children of men, must be our starting-point. Error in the premises implies, of course, error in the conclusions. We may test our Theology as science does the chemical composition of the stars by a spectroscope. Certain lines or bands in the spectrum betray the presence of certain gases; so, if we detect in Theology that it leads to a

conclusion such as Wesley once said to Whitfield he detected in Calvinism (your God is my devil), we need go no farther. It is not enough, as semi-Calvinists do, to fall back on some Baxterian compromise, which only lays one load of difficulty on the back of another; our only safe course then is, as Hales of Eton did, to "bid good-bye to John Calvin," and to turn from compromises which remind us of the practitioner who ordered ice to his patient's head, and then, afraid of the shock, gave directions that the ice should be warmed.

For this reason Arminian Theology, as it is taught by Wesley and his followers, is only a halting-place set up in the eighteenth century for those who are coming out of seventeenth into nineteenth century Theology. To be consistent, men must go farther; they must part with forensic and federal Theology alike. And here we may say with Hamlet, here's the respect, that makes calamity of so long life. Men fear that when they have parted with the popular Theology, which is a kind of dilution of Calvin and Luther's teaching, that there is nothing left but what Cardinal Newman, in one of his most piquant essays, describes as the nebulous Theology of latitudinarians. Of the popular Theology he observes, in its contrast with what he calls Latitudinarianism, "Suffice that it has all the external extravagance of Latitudinarianism, without any gain in consistency. It is less consistent, because it is morally better. Latitudinarianism is less inconsistent, because it is intellectually deeper. Both, however, are mere theories in theology, and ought to be discarded by serious men."[1] Such is the spectre by which men are to be frightened into one of the only two folds, the Anglican or the Roman, where the apostolic succession is held, and grace is dispensed to the faithful

[1] *Vid.* Newman's *Discussions and Arguments*, p. 141.

from orthodox hands. As a matter of fact, laymen treat such alarms with the contempt they deserve. At the same time, it must be admitted that the term Broad Church Theology is much too nebulous for the majority, who, if they think at all, must think on definite lines, and cannot endure a *sic et non* in Theology. It is our desire, then, to show to the satisfaction of sincere minds of this type, that a man may hold large and hopeful views of God's character and purposes to our race here and hereafter without dissolving into a nebulous mist all his old opinions, either as to the meaning of Christ's death in itself, or of the efficacy of the Holy Spirit acting in some way mysterious to us on the human will. Too often it is said that we must give up the Atonement if we demur to certain Lutheran or rather scholastic formulas of merit imputed. Too often, again, it is said that we must deprave the doctrines of grace if we decline to hold some magical notion of conversion, acting antecedent to the strivings of the human will after holiness and conformity to the Divine Will.

For these reasons we desire to describe the new Theology in its positive rather than its negative aspects. As to criticism of the negative school, we may say of Theology as of the drowned Ophelia, "Too much water hast thou had already." We should like to set forth a Theology on deductive lines, since all Theology must be deductive. The profession of an attempt to construct an inductive Theology shows that writers are using terms the precise meaning of which they do not know. All Theology is deduction or inference from certain premises or postulates, the first ground of which is in the written word of God, but the verification of which ultimately rests on conscience. What we mean is, a man who uses the light of conscience aright, by no amount of text affirmation

could be induced to believe that God could lie, or "repent as a man" that He could pass by the least transgression, or regard any of His children, however erring, as other than outcast members of His family to be brought in, if there is any meaning in the term grace. But while Theology is thus deductive from certain postulates of Scripture and conscience, we cannot be too careful to see that our postulates are rightly assumed, and that our inferences do fairly flow out of them.

This is the task which lies before us, and on our candour in drawing these inferences will depend the truth or error of that which claims to be the new Theology. Lastly, we have to remember that *dolus latet in generalibus.* A slight error in calculating such orbits as the heavenly bodies will lead to errors incredibly great in their results. The equation of light, as astronomers call it, has also to be considered. We have to allow for the time which it takes for the light to traverse the small space between the object on the glass and the retina of our eye. Much in the same way there is an amount of unconscious aberration of every judgment, even the soundest and the most cautious. None of us can be too much on our guard against the *præjudicia* of self, which may bring in postulates of our own devising along with those which we certainly derive from the fountain of God's word. The danger of idol-making is even deeper, because more subtle than that of idol-worship. For one man in our day who bows down to a god of his own or his neighbour's making, there are ten who first make a god to themselves, and then bow down to it. We do not even wait for a priest like Aaron to do the founder's work for us, and make the calf of which we supply the golden earrings. In our day it is one step from image-making to image-worship, since we break the

first and second commandments together at a bound. For this reason we cannot be too cautious how we proceed, and should advance step by step. If the new Theology is to deserve the distinction of replacing the old, it must be taken in hand by men as serious, and penetrated with a sense as deep of a divine calling and consecration to their task, as those who drew up the old. No one can read Calvin's *Institutes*, for instance, that masterpiece of fearless logic, as well as Calvin's apologetics for the Theology which was new in that day, without feeling that in its tone and temper lay the success of its appeal to the consciences of men. The new Theology of our day is demanded as loudly, let it enter then as devoutly and advisedly on its task. The Reformation itself must be reformed if it is not to lose itself in its own sands, as the Tridentine Church did with the scholastic Theology. But to do so thoroughly it must be done seriously, and by men whose ideas are filiated by historical continuity on the ideas of the Reformation Church, as that Church in its turn was filiated on the historical past of Christendom. For this reason no mere philosophical protest is enough. The solitary thinker may see, with Sir William Hamilton, that no opinion in Theology but has first emerged in philosophy. It is true that the Schoolmen and Reformers only carried on controversies on fate and freewill as old as Kapila the Hindu, as modern as Kant the German, or Comte the Frenchman. But what of that? the difference of manner more than makes up for a certain resemblance of matter between the discussions of the philosopher and those of the divine. The latter, when he attains to truth, handles it with a touch of certainty not given to the former. At best the philosopher breaks off with a "*sic cogitavit*," and at his best the divine ends with an "*o altitudo!*" This alone accounts for the common

instincts of mankind going to the divine rather than to the philosopher for an account of God and His dealings to men. But out of this very craving for definiteness and certainty grows our greatest danger. Dogmatism in a philosopher is not expected, and therefore this is not his snare, though he not seldom falls into it. But with the divine, pressed on all sides, and bound not to strike an uncertain note, it needs much of the meekness of wisdom not to speak when in doubt on the oracles of God. He should be silent where he feels that they are dumb, and not cover over and disguise from the laity his own doubt with dogma. It is in this temper that we desire to enter on our task, which is partly critical, but also partly constructive. We shall pass under review a few of the central truths of Theology, and point out how far the old modes of expression fall in with the reigning ideas of former ages, but are fallen out of date at present, and wait to be replaced by terms taken, in their turn, from the reigning ideas of our own day. If this task should seem presumptuous to some who are satisfied with the past, it will equally seem absurd to others who have broken entirely with the past, and who regard any restatement of Theology as a case of the dead burying their dead. Between the idolaters of the past and those who are waiting for some unknown God of the future, we shall probably fall in for blame on both sides. We have counted the cost of this, and are prepared to pay the price. As a rule, the professional class stand out against any thoroughgoing reform of the profession itself. It is so in medicine; it is so in law; and we must not expect an exception in divinity. Among lawyers, as a lucid writer on the land laws remarks, "A considerable number are hostile to change, and a greater number indifferent. Those who make the shoe do not feel it

pinch, and those who feel it pinch do not know how shoes are made."[1]

Mutato nomine: this is more true of Theology, because the subject-matter is the God who changes not, and hence by a natural fallacy of thought we argue that our conclusions about Him must be unchangeable as well. The unsettling of men's minds on such a subject is regarded as a sin almost against nature. Hence it is that a blind conservatism does the work of a destructive radicalism. It is the case of Bacon's rule, *morosa retentio antiquarum morum maxima innovatio est.* For this reason we go forward regardless of professional prejudice, and taking such objections rather as arguments to urge us on to our task. To the laity, after all, the appeal is made. They do not make shoes, but they wear them, and so feel where they pinch. If they shall read and reflect, divines, not a few in the same state of discontent with our present suspense and half faith in half truths, will also lend their support. In any case, we go forward relying on the assurance that in all ages Wisdom is justified of all her children.

[1] The *Land Laws*, by F. Pollock, M.A., etc., p. 4.

CHAPTER II.

NEW WINE IN NEW BOTTLES.

If we may trust a teacher whose sayings are true, alike yesterday, to-day, and for ever, we are ever to be on our guard not to put the new wine of a fresh and fermenting spiritual conviction into the old and shrunken skins of a dried-up ceremonialism. It scarcely needed divine wisdom to point the moral of this lesson; and yet that which men in everyday life see the folly of, that theologians will do and continue doing in spite of experience. Instead of seeing that new ideas require fresh forms in which to contain them, they bring out the old bottles and make a great show of the elasticity of these shrunken skins, because they are not instantly burst. They forget that it is only *after* the wine has begun to ferment that the skin begins to distend and crack. That which follows is that both the wine is spilled and the bottles are burst. The loss is complete. Both the new faith and the old forms suffer from the unnatural attempt to combine them. It is another illustration of the truth of the French saying, *autres temps autres mœurs.* The ideas of one age do not fit in with the institutions of another. What are called revolutions in history are only violent attempts of the old to put down the new, and in most cases the instinct of self-preservation explains, if it does not excuse, the attempt. So it was with the Stuarts in

England and the Bourbons in France. They argued, not quite unreasonably, that the old skins of absolute monarchy would not contain the new wine of liberty of conscience and the rights of man. Hence they resisted with fatal consistency the endeavour to reconcile old and new together. They failed, and were swept away, and we blame or pity them according as our sympathies go with or against the torrent of new ideas which they vainly sought to stem. But it is only just to their memory to add that they were at least logical and consistent. They argued with the General of the Jesuits, when urged to compromise and so avert a decree of suspension, *Sint ut sunt aut non sint.* There are cases of this kind in which the new and the old will not meet and match. When such irreconcilables meet, then there is nothing for it but an open conflict. Reform is no longer possible, but rebellion ending in revolution more or less complete, as in this country two centuries ago, and in France rather less than a century since.

It is only in Theology that the majority of men fail to see that new ideas and old forms of thought are like new wine in old wine skins. The reason for this unreasoning conservatism of old forms of expression in Theology, out of which the meaning has long since died out by senseless iteration, is partly ignorance and partly indifference. Superstition and Secularism, these are the two serpents sent to strangle religion like the infant Hercules in his cradle. Some care nothing whatever for the hereafter, and so call themselves Agnostics. Others care a great deal for what they suppose is their soul's salvation, but their care takes a wrong direction. They lay stress on sound formulas of belief or right ceremonials of worship, and the result in both cases is that the external kills the internal. Religion shrivels into formalism. It becomes

a thing of shreds and patches,—shreds of old-world philosophy and patches of modern scientific thinking, ill assorted together,—and so the rent is made worse.

Can we wonder that the result of this archaism in religion, this obstinate clinging to old forms which will not hold the new ideas, is a general scepticism on the part of men of the world? They distrust Theology on account of its timid conservatism or rather antiquarianism, which values a ceremony or a doctrine in an inverse ratio to its bearing on modern life and thought. Let it be shown that it is patristic or mediæval, or let it shelter itself behind the name of one of the fathers of the Reformation, all is then well. It is orthodox, and to edification; and with this stamp on it, like the duty paid on some quack medicine, the public is satisfied. The nostrum is safe, or else it would not have paid duty at all. Such is the way in which Time sets his seal on old theological formulas; and they pass as orthodox with the majority, because they are old.

But what of the minority, whom religious teachers pass by, as the priest and Levite did, on the other side? They are called hard names, and are regarded as sceptics, agnostics, and so forth, because in most cases they are, as Milton was, "church-outed by the prelates." We do not say that dogmatic Theology is responsible for all the scepticism that is in the world. But Burke's paradox, that vice, in losing all its grossness, loses half its malignity, is not inapplicable to this case. It is conceivable that, with all the dogmatism, at least half the scepticism would disappear. By dogmatism let us add that we mean not so much a definite form in which to put a definite truth, since, if we hold a truth distinctly, we must express it clearly; but what we condemn as dogmatism is rather the temper which forbids a new

idea until it is fitted into the old framework. Dogmatism is, in a word, the tyranny of phrasemakers, who put upon us the conceptions of the past, regardless of the question whether they are abreast of the conscience and common sense of our age or not. Theology, it cannot be too carefully remembered, must have dogmas, *i.e.* the outward and definite expression of an inward and definite truth. Here all are agreed; but divines too often forget that this dogma is a kind of Tithonus union of a mortal and an immortal—a variant quantity with a constant. The spiritual truth which is constant clothes itself from age to age in the forms, philosophical or juridical, which are current in that age. This is the mortal element wedded to the immortal, and hence the discord and confusion which springs up when the immortal element demands a new vesture and form of expression which the old and unyielding dogma is unable to give. Then the piece of new cloth is sewn on to the old garment, till the rent is made worse. Then the new wine is poured into the old skins, till the wine is spilled and the bottles are marred. The truth is, that with new ideas, a new Theology is needed in which to invest these ideas with their true meaning as spiritual phenomena. The old jurisprudence and the old philosophy sufficed to express the thoughts of a Theology which rested on the governmental, not the parental, conception of God and on His relation to the universe, which was dualistic and not monistic. But the old dualism of mind and matter is now obsolete, and hence it is that, for want of restating the terms of Theology, the best minds are drifting fast to Pantheism, seeing they find no holding ground to faith in the old anchorage of Deism. In the same way the magisterial conception of God and duty is out of date, and a religion which rests and is

supposed to rest entirely on it suffers perilously. The best minds of the age cannot put up with a doctrine of the Atonement which rests on a forensic transaction and a metaphor of the transfer of guilt and vicarious punishment which the conscience of the age regrets.

This all intelligent divines have long since seen and tried to meet by various expedients and compromises. The Broad Church movement, as it is vaguely called, is only the well-meant attempt to piece together the old and the new, and to put some of the new wine, well diluted with the old, into skins not too shrunk to bear the process. So it is that we meet with a type of thought known as advanced Protestantism, which combines a kind of respect for old and new. The attempt is praiseworthy; but it fails from the suspicion that it is merely a compromise based on prudential grounds, and lacking the support of a firm conviction. These New Light divines, as they are called, partly from fear of presumption, but principally from fear of alarming timid and ignorant minds, fail to lead the movement which they put themselves at the head of; they minimize their own action, and so add to the alarm which they wish to allay. They fear to be constructive, and so are regarded as merely negative. If they boldly set out with proclaiming that Theology, like an old house, must be pulled down and built up again from the foundation with the same or new materials, as the case might require, they would actually alarm less than they do at present; men would know what they mean, and allow the destruction for the sake of the reconstruction. As it is at present, they cling to the old house, with all its defects, from fear of being left out in the cold. Nor are they to be blamed; till the new school clear themselves from the suspicion of being merely destructive, and show that they

can be constructive as well, can we wonder that men say, "Let this new wine ferment as it may, we prefer the old wine in the old vessels"?

Hence it is that the "new Theology," as it calls itself, must get beyond its merely negative and critical attitude if it is to commend itself as adapted to the wants of the age. It must say what it means as to Miracles and Prophecy, Inspiration, the Atonement, and, above all, Eschatology, if it is to escape the charge of being merely critical. The difficulty arises at this point, that the men who are critical are generally not constructive; while the constructive class of divines are, as a rule, blindly conservative of the past, and dread the critical temper as Rationalism thinly disguised, if disguised at all. There is a call in our day for some one to step forward and offer to do for English Theology what the "Mediation School" of Tholuck and Neander were supposed to do for German Theology, when naturalists and supernaturalists had said their say, and the deistic controversy of the last century had died down like a fire smothered in its own ashes. The new Theology must be constructive, not merely critical; and who is to set the example and lead the way? Learned men of the professional type naturally shrink from doing so. The most competent, perhaps, are the most reluctant; for those who have lived in libraries know the presumption of attempting to re-write Theology. Even a "body of divinity," in the sense that a Wardlaw or a Watson attempted to throw their lectures to students into book form, would seem to our age so much surplusage. Dogmatic divinity is out of date, and, in its stead, German professors now write their *Dogmen-Geschichtes*, which are critical only, but not the least constructive. So the want is felt; but none step forward to meet the need, and in the end scepticism and dogmatism are left face to face in the

field alone and to themselves—the one to carry off one class of our people, and the other the other. Society all the while sinks deeper each day into the slough of agnostic indifference, because neither Priestism nor Pietism—the two current forms of thought in this country—has the courage to step in and stay the plague.

The restatement, then, of the leading truths of Theology, in terms consistent with modern conceptions of God and the universe, this is the one great *desideratum* of our age. In one sense we may compare such a work to the *Novum Organum* of Bacon. Like Chiron the Centaur, who taught Achilles the use of arms which he was never himself to wield, so Bacon pointed out the true path of discovery which he was himself unqualified to enter on. He had little of the specialist himself, and thought meanly of those who were, and underestimated, as we know in the case of Gilbert, the anticipations of modern science; but he was at least able to detect the fundamental error of the old scholastic philosophy, which argued from principles instead of up to them. Bacon at least pointed out the hindrances, and suggested some few of the helps, to discovery. In the same way it is conceivable that the outlines of the new Theology may be laid down by one who would be unable to fill up details. This would be the work, not of a single lifetime, but of the lives of several competent and critical minds. It is enough if we indicate, in the briefest possible terms, the four leading truths on which Theology needs to be restated; it will remain to follow up, in succeeding chapters, such details in these truths as we have space to enlarge on.

Put in the briefest terms, these terms are: The Being of God and His relation to the universe; 2. The mode of our acceptance with Him, and of redemption, its plan and

purpose; 3. The nature of revelation and the interaction of the human and divine will in what is known as Inspiration; 4. The destiny of man here and hereafter, with the larger hope of the human race as a whole.

These, in a few words, are the landmarks within which inquiry must move. It is on these questions that the age is exercised and waiting some *Ductor Dubitantium*. There may be a false modesty in holding back from these subjects as well as a rash presumption. If fools rush in where angels fear to tread, they are also sluggards who stand back when many on all sides are saying, who will show us any good? In some respects, a private and obscure person has an advantage which some one with a high position or a professional reputation at stake cannot possess. Heresy-hunting has happily died down within the last few years. As a rule, it finds its only retreat among the smaller and more obscure sects, whose leaders are loud-tongued in proportion to their ignorance of their own ignorance. On the other hand, eminent men, whether as prelates or professors, shrink from going deeply into discussions such as those we have glanced at in outline. They limit themselves too generally to a few critical hints, and leave the constructive work of re-writing Theology to the Church of the future. This would be all very well if the lay readers of these critical hints were content to remain at their critical point of view. But negative views as to the Theology of the past soon pass into positive. Men make up their mind that if the historical Scriptures are admitted not to be historical, then they cease to be Scripture in any emphatic sense of the term. The descent, for instance, from the old Rationalism to the new Theology of the absolute religion, of which Christianity is only one of many realizations, is so rapid that we have already seen this Rubicon passed in the case of many Unitarian

Churches, and the same tendency is at work among Churches which cling more closely to the old form of sound words.

For all these reasons, then, we dare not hesitate any longer to attempt a reconstruction of Theology on its new bases. Our task will be positive and not merely negative; it will build up and plant, and not merely pull down and destroy. If it fails altogether, as it may do, or comes lamentably short of its ideal, as it certainly will, no one is prejudiced; no reputation risked and lost; no scandal caused, as when some leader in the religious world has to make a concession to the demands of advancing science which he had loudly repudiated in his younger years. This is not a Concordat, let us add, like those many well-meant attempts now becoming fewer to "reconcile," as it is called, Science and Theology. For our part, we have scant faith in these Concordats, and think they fail, since the writers set out with a wrong assumption and so lead up to a lame and impotent conclusion. They set out with a dogmatic assumption that a certain book, assumed to be infallible, contains statements which do not harmonize with the conclusions arrived at by modern science. It strikes the ingenious mind of these harmonists that by a little concession here and a little compromise there, the two accounts of the universe, the one geocentric and the other heliocentric, may be pieced together, and so a certain accommodation be patched up, a truce, at best, until the next war breaks out.

It is not on these lines, as we think, that Theology must be re-written, but rather on those of a frank recognition that the Theology of a past age could only suit a past age. Of all fixed delusions one of the most mischievous is the popular error, still held in many quarters, that in a world of change Theology is to be the one truth which, like the

laws of the Medes and Persians, changeth not. It was one of Lord Macaulay's specious sophisms, which even deeper thinkers than he was have repeated, and so lent to it the sanction of their names, that moral and material science are contrasted in this respect, that the latter was progressive but the former not. As a matter of fact, the advances made in ethical truth are immeasurable from the superstitions of primitive men to the calm and well-balanced actions of a Christian philanthropist of our day. "How vast the contrast is," a modern writer truly remarks, "from the blind and selfish superstition of the Shetlander who runs away from a drowning seaman (under the notion that he who saves a drowning man will receive at his hands some injury) to the enlightened benevolence which plants a lifeboat on the sea-beach to succour the stranded ships!" (*vid.* Bailey, *Essay on the Pursuit of Truth*, p. 7). Moral progress is as constant, in a word, as material. In a rude condition of society, actions are broadly classified as right or wrong, good or bad. It is only in proportion as society advances that finer moral judgments are formed. The neutral tints of the colours of good and evil begin to stand out into distinctness, and what we may call our natural colour-blindness to disappear under careful moral training, and habitual attention to moral distinctions which at last becomes instinctive in all advanced races. To suppose, then, that there is growth in moral, but no advance in theological truth, is to suppose a state of things the most damaging of all to Theology. It would be to assume that Theology had no concern with human progress, and was like some binary star which might have some orbit of its own, but at such an immense distance from our system that it might be safely disregarded as non-existent.

Theologians, in their blind zeal for what they call a supernatural revelation, have often given this non-natural

account of religion. But Theology has, like other truths, to be fought for twice over. It has first to be rescued from its foes and then saved from its friends, the latter often the harder task of the two. The trained theologian, who has fought stoutly and long to rescue Theology from a perilous confusion with philosophy, is seldom as much on his guard against the philosophy falsely so called, and which creeps in by a back-door under the specious name of dogmatics. It is this dogmatic Theology which is only philosophy under another name, and all the more dangerous for being a wolf in sheep's clothing, which causes all the confusion that we complain of. If the Reformation had made the clean sweep of school divinity which it professed to do, we might be spared the necessity of having to draw up a new Theology, to express the enlarged conceptions of God and His universe which modern science has unfolded to us. But the Reformation soon sank back into the arms of a dogmatism more slavish if possible than that which it had just rescued us from. More Lutheran than Luther, more Calvinist than Calvin, more Anglican than the Fathers of the Anglican Reform, this is the pitiable comment of history on our boasted Reformation. Strangely enough, many saw this, none more acutely than Bacon himself, but with his cool and too pliant intellect he could only hint to the royal pedant on the throne that the new school divinity was not a whit less tyrannous than the old. The sharp sword of persecution helped, it is true, to open the eyes of some. "For my part," John Robinson of Leyden said in his address to the Pilgrim Fathers when embarking for a new world in 1620, "I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed Churches, who are come to a period in religion and will go no farther than the instruments of their Reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; what-

ever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it; and the Calvinists you see stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented, for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but were they living now would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received."

This wise advice to remember that the Lord hath yet more truth to break out of His holy word, was no sooner given than forgotten. What these descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers did when, changing places with the persecutors, they in their turn became a dominant Church, is written in what is known as the Blue Laws of New England. Between old Prelatist and young Puritan there was so little to choose on this score, that but for the continued dissidence of dissent as we may describe the Seekers and New Light followers of Fox, it is impossible to say what was gained on the side of liberty by the Reformation.

All this has been impressed on our age in a hundred forms already, and yet it has not struck the majority, even of intelligent critics, that there is only one remedy. The axe must be laid at the root of the tree of theological dogmatism. Every one of its dogmas must be challenged, and their authority questioned. It was Kant who saw clearly that to Hume's philosophical scepticism there was only one reply, which was the *Critique of Reason.* In his Prolegomena to the *Critique* he observes proudly enough, but the event has justified his boast, that if Hume awoke him from his dogmatic slumbers, it was to give his researches in the field of speculative philosophy a new direction. "Hume," as he goes on to observe, "never dreamt of a possible final science of this nature, and in

order to land his ship in safety, he ran it aground on the shore of scepticism, where it might lie and rot, instead of which it is my purpose to furnish a pilot, who, according to certain principles of seamanship derived from a knowledge of the globe, and supplied with a complete map and compass, may steer the ship with safety wherever it seems good to him."

This was bold language, but the event has justified the boast. Since Kant's *Critique* mental science has taken a new departure. The dogmatic method on such subjects is a thing of the past, and later Kantians are now taking Kant at his word, and criticize the *Critique*. They are so far on the right track by following up a method of approximation and gradual bit-by-bit verification, such as has at last brought astronomy, for instance, to the positive stage on which we reason alternately, deductively, or inductively, and so reach the highest stage of certainty conceivable.

In Theology alone, of all the sciences, this is not so much as thought of by the majority whose dogmatic slumbers continue unbroken, as Kant's were in metaphysics, till Hume's scepticism on the causal *nexus* forced him to ask himself, Are there any laws of thought at all, and what are its limits? Dogmatists and sceptics still have the field to themselves in Theology. A minority have a suspicion of the evil, but have not clearly pointed out the remedy. The *Inductive Method of Christian Inquiry*, an essay by Percy Strutt, contains some useful hints as to erroneous methods in the past, but we search in vain for the *Novum Organum*. Induction is no more an instrument of discovery than deduction. We may cheat ourselves with phrases as Bacon apparently did, as if by setting the mind on the right track it would go on of itself, and discovery come of itself like the figures in a

table of logarithms or the result in Babbage's calculating machine. The truth is, that the qualities needed for discovery are as much ethical as intellectual. We need a deep distrust of our present attainments, an impatience of half truths, and a disquiet under the twilight of existing compromises which is so rare that only a minority even feel any discomfort at a sense of the ignorance of their own ignorance. To become as little children, and so to enter the kingdom of heaven, this is a phrase the deep meaning of which few suspect. On the contrary, what they dread much more is what they call unsettling their minds before first asking themselves if they have any fixed opinions to unsettle beyond that "base authority of others' books which every earthly godfather of heaven's lights" can pretend to give. That saying of Beccaria is more often quoted than understood: "La storia del progresso umano ci da l'idea di un immenso pelago d'errori, in quale pochi, e confusi, e in gran distanza verità sopranuotano." The story of human progress gives us the idea of an immense sea of error, in which only a few in confusion and at a great distance from each other emerge to the surface of truth.

Were we so impressed with our own ignorance, Theology would advance as other sciences, instead of lingering on in a dead past, and under the blind authority of fathers and doctors, whose chief claim is that they are of the past. We should act on the rule that a new age must have a new Theology—at least we should submit its judgments to a critique not less searching than that of Kant, and perhaps the result would be the same.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE BEING OF GOD.

The age of Deism, as it has been called, passed away with the rise of the critical philosophy. The justly celebrated *Kritik of Reason* of Immanuel Kant gave it its deathblow. The so-called proofs, ontological, cosmological, teleological, of the Being of God never survived the searching tests of the *Critique*. It was a favourite thought of Sir W. Hamilton, that the Theology of every age must bear a certain relation to its philosophy. Hence it is, that as no error can emerge in Theology which has not first emerged in philosophy, so the truths and discoveries of the one react on the other. The application of this remark to our subject is obvious. A century ago, it may be said that Deism or Theism, which is only the scientific expression of Deism, was the admitted basis of all serious thinking on all sides. Deists were divided between the naturalists and supernaturalists, but the basis of thought was the same for both. Natural and revealed religion, as it was called, divided the field between them. As for the so-called Free Thinkers, against whom by far the most convincing part of the *Analogy* was directed, they were only the Uhlans of an invading host of Atheists and Agnostics, of Pantheists and Positivists, who were not yet seen in force. They jested at truth, as Bishop Butler mournfully observed, as if by way of reprisals for Christianity having

so long restrained their vices, and his tone of solemn reproof at these mockers at the sanctities of life and the safeguards of duty shows that he did not regard them as more than the same rabble rout that Milton's Lady of Comus rebukes. We have spoken of them as the Uhlans of an advancing host of more serious opponents. In a different sense we may speak of them as the last of the anti-Puritan reaction of Charles II.'s reign. The Free Thinkers of our day are of a different and more serious type, and with a change of opponents there must be a change in our attack and defence. Theology has now to ask itself whether the old deistic basis on which our scientific conceptions all rested being gone, we can go on building our proofs of the Being of God on the old supports of design and adaptation which suited our fathers, instead of the one which we now set out from. We need not allude here to Mr. Picton's paradox of Christian Pantheism, by which the last thoughts of advanced science and the devoutest thoughts of Christian mysticism are seen to touch, extremes meeting as in that rarest of phenomena a circular rainbow. A Christian pantheist is a contradiction in terms. Hence we must be careful not to make entangling alliances, or to restate the old theistic argument in such a way that our sense of the presence of God as the light and life of the world is melted away into a dreamy Pantheism. We dare not in this way let go the thought of a Being who is unique and transcendent, and so "make one of all Theology" as the Mystics succeeded in doing. At the same time, it is important to recognise what was the error of the old Theism which lays it open to the charge that the best scientific minds of the age are in a reaction against it. The old Theism was adequate to express the scientific conceptions of a Newton or a Leibnitz, a Locke

or a Boyle, but it fails to content the scientific thought of our day, and it is no use for the theologian to evoke the names of these "dead but sceptred sovereigns who still rule our spirits from their urns," and to insist that the fault must lie with the scientists and not with the theologians.

When we look into the question more closely, we see that the old Theism rested on a mechanical conception of the universe. Such was the Newtonian philosophy. His laws of motion set out from the axiom of the inertia of matter until acted on by an impulse from without. The world was a billiard ball, the table was the universe, and hence the line of its motion could be stated in mathematical terms taken from the laws of number. Beyond this point the science of last century did not go, hence there was no serious breach between its philosophy and its Theology. But the scientific ideas of our day are taken from a diverse order of phenomena. We have gone back in one sense to the old Platonic conception of the universe as a great living thing. What in Spinoza was an evil dream of science yet unborn, is now a sober reality. Instead of conceiving of God as a Being above and outside the universe, the transcendent Deity of the past, men now think of Him as the immanent and living centre of Force, the battery, so to speak with reverence, whence proceed all the forces of the universe. In a word, we no longer speak of laws as acting on matter from without, as overcoming its inertia and directing it in the course it shall take. We now speak of forces acting from within, and evolving one form out of another by some biological law of growth which we call evolution. Hence it is that our conception of the Deity has been profoundly modified by the altered attitude in which we regard the universe. Pantheism is a phrase of such an

equivocal meaning, that we shrink from using it at all unless we explain how we use it, and with what reservations. At the same time, there is nothing gained by shutting our eyes to the fact that unless we can make an approach to what, for want of a better term, we must call Christian Pantheism, our Theology, on the most fundamental question of all, will strike a note to which modern science will have no response. The old Theology, like the old philosophy, was built up on what we may call the basis of philosophical dualism. There were two, and only two, modes of existence, commonly called mind and matter, and the problem of Theology was how to bridge over the gulf fixed between the two. How could matter act on mind, and mind on matter? and what was the relation of God to both? It was Descartes who in reality was the father of the deistic philosophy that reigned without a rival till Kant came to demolish it. Descartes had dug a trench broad and deep between these two categories of mind and matter, and then left it to his followers to bridge it over as best they could. Spinoza declared it insoluble, and fell back on Pantheism; but Malebranche in one way and Leibnitz in another offered a solution of how God acted on both. Berkeley tried the *à priori* road, and Locke and the Scotch school the common-sense solution until Hume arose, and with his searching criticism put an end to both these quiddities of mind and matter. In our day, and indeed ever since Kant, we have ceased to trouble ourselves with the problem. We accept the mystery, and do not go behind a certain phenomenal mode of speaking of the laws of thought and the laws of things. Our philosophic nescience, of which Hamilton and Mansel, after Kant, have almost made an idol of, leaves us in face of a great Unknown. What thought is in itself, or what the thing is in itself,

the *ding an sich* of the Hegelian, this is now ruled to be out of court and *ultra vires;* and so content with our philosophic nescience, we leave off in a kind of despair of ontology.

But the human mind will not sit down for ever content with a *ne plus ultra* formula; it scoffs at such pillars of Hercules as those which Kant set up, and within which the late Sir William Hamilton insisted that research is bound to limit itself. But philosophy, which has no goal and no zone, has moved on in our day. It is bound by the law of its being not to make nescience its terminus, hence it must go on to resolve the problem whether mind and matter are original entities, or only different manifestations of some original force, which is God. We must at least lift a corner of the veil of Isis, and ask, are matter and mind twain or one? The new philosophy teaches what we should call monism, as opposed to the old dualism, of mind and matter. We owe, perhaps, more to Swedenborg than many are aware for educating us to see that mind and matter are only varieties of the same primal entity, which is force, and which, whether as life or light, is only the manifestation in a creaturely form of that which is the Eternal Wisdom or Word of God. Using the two terms influx and efflux, Swedenborg shows that "the physical universe is merely the visible costume and representation of the spiritual universe which, from the central Sun of Deity, passes through the *substantia prima* of the inner universe to the soul a spirituous fluid, which is the inmost life of rational beings, and so out into the external organism and outer world." There is thus no radical difference between the so-called material and spiritual world; they are simply different stages or degrees of energy of the one stream of efflux or influx,

which, coming out from God, reaches at length its ultimate form, or is exhausted as the outermost representations of the visible world, organic and inorganic.[1]

Such is in outline the new philosophy, which, in contrast with Cartesian Dualism, we may describe as Monism. It is needless to add that the soundest thinkers on the side of exact science are all enrolled, more or less, on the side of monism. Not to refer to others, this is the keynote of the authors of *The Unseen Universe*, who have done more than any theologians we can name to reconcile reason with faith, and to bridge over the abyss between the natural and the supernatural. It is a hopeful sign for that ultimate harmony between science and religion, which never can be forced on, but which we may gently lead up to, that the most exact thinkers in science now loudly repudiate the term materialism as much as they do spiritualism; they deny that they belong to either school. As for what formerly was called "matter," they deny its existence as an entity as stoutly as Berkeley did, but with better reasons. Ever since Boscovitch described the atom as a centre of force, the germ theory of existence has become the dominant one. The old *ab ovo omnia* theory lies at the basis of all our biological inquiries. Matter is simply the form in which some formative principle, which is force in its primary conception and God in its ultimate, clothes itself. The correlation of these forces, as it is called, or the way that light passes into life and heat into motion, still further strengthens our conception of the universe as, in a sense, a living whole, or rather as the vesture of One who decks Himself with light as with a garment. That phrase in Faust—

[1] See Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion*, p. 449.

> " A web ever growing,
> A life ever glowing,—
> Thus at Time's whizzing loom I spin,
> And weave the living vesture that God is mantled in,"

aptly enough expresses what the best modern thought now represents the universe to be as a whole.

It is needless to observe that the first tendency of this new line of thought is directly hostile to the old Theism. Hence it is that such loud complaints were and are still raised by the old school of divines of the spread of Pantheism; but may it not be that the fault is with ourselves. We have failed to go with the times, and to revise our theological conceptions, so as to bring them up abreast of the best thoughts of science. The remedy for this is, as we have seen, to recast our terminology, and to draw out a new set of conceptions in theology in harmony with these ruling ideas in science. Could we plant ourselves at the new point of view, we should find not only the old antinomy between mind and matter disappear, but also with it the standing difficulty, which is unsolved by Descartes and Leibnitz, of conceiving how the Deity can operate on matter by one set of laws and on mind by another. As for the old contrast between the natural and the supernatural, this would disappear of itself, and with it all difficulty as to the place of miracles in a universe where the reign of law extends without a break. We should see that Creation, instead of a six days' operation, which was only a gracious accommodation to the conceptions of mankind in their intellectual infancy, is a continuous process the days of which are æons, and those æons are as many as there are stages upward from the monad to man. Our conception of God as Creator would be that of the text, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I

work." God is ever going forth out of the abysmal depth of His perfection and overflowing as Creator, because it is His nature and property so to overflow, because, in the beautiful simile of the Psalmist, "He openeth His hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness." Light, Life, Love,—this is the Trinity of manifestation of God in the lower, middle, and upper worlds of His universe, the first one reaching down to the mineral, the second passing up from the plant to the animal, and the third beginning at man, and passing on upward into the angelic world, till it returns back by influx of praise and worship to God, who is its original fount of Being.

We may call this a spiritual philosophy, and make it the groundwork of a better, because a spiritual, Theology; but it is only spiritual in the sense that it is not material. Its first axiom is this, that, discarding the term matter as a phrase without meaning, we should set out with the term force; and as force is only a relative term, it implies some form on which it acts, some vesture which it is ever weaving round itself. It is the life which sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the plant, wakes in the animal, and rises into consciousness at last in man. This is that restless, ever-rushing *vis viva* of nature which leaps from the sunbeam into the soil, there quickens the sleeping germ of plant life, and so passes from stage to stage in the scale of existence, till in man it reaches the last term of what we may call the boundary line between mind and matter.

Now Theology must be blind indeed to the true teachings of its own Book if it does not see in these ruling ideas of our age, which are monistic, not dualistic, a class of conceptions which are in deeper harmony with the old Book than the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter. Accustomed as we are to read the Book in the

light of the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter, we are inclined at first to say that the Book teaches this dualism; there are passages which certainly look that way. Thus, when it is said that God took of the dust of the earth to mould man's body, and then breathed into that frame of clay the breath of lives, what is this but the old dualism of mind and matter? but a closer study brings us back to the deeper view, which is also the simpler. The creation hymn of Gen. i., and also the proem to St. John's Gospel, both point to the same thought, that the Word went forth, and all things began to exist in and through and by Him. In Him was life. He was the life of all lower lives, and at last in man that life rises into something spiritual, which we call the light of men.

In passages such as these, of which it is unnecessary to accumulate proof texts, it is clear that the sense of Scripture is against the old dualism of mind and matter on which the deistic philosophy and Theology of last century rested for its chief support. It would be foreign, of course, to the simplicity of Scripture to go to it for proof for or against a mere philosophical thesis, such as the distinction between monism and dualism; but it is fair to say that, while Scripture is neutral on such questions as long as they are purely scholastic, it cannot be said to speak with uncertain sound on such a question as the eternity of matter, or its pre-existence as the *materia prima* out of which a *Deus opifex* moulded the universe. All that mountain of learning which Cudworth in his *Intellectual System* has piled up, like Ossa on Olympus, in reply to the Materialists of his day, crumbles away of itself as soon as we see that the mode of discussing these questions has changed its character since his time. The Epicurean Atomist of that day

has disappeared so completely, that it would be difficult to meet with a Materialist in the sense that Cudworth discusses the term with his opponents. There are Scientists, like Büchner and Moleschott, who deal with such phrases as *kraft und stoff* as if *stoff*, or matter, were endowed with a certain inherent potentiality, which they describe as *kraft*, and which rises from scale to scale, till in man it reaches the height of self-consciousness, and then like the fountain rising in foam and falling in spray, so the circle goes round, much as the Buddhist conception of the wheel of life. This is the type of modern Materialism which we have to deal with, and to which there is only one reply, which is this, that it leaves out the one single factor which determines the whole problem, viz. the existence of moral good and evil, and the eternal, ineradicable contrast between the two. If there be no tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then we readily admit that there is no tree of life, and then man's existence is as cheap as that of brutes, and as worthless. But once we admit a conscience of good and evil, the existence of a God is involved in that admission, without which the terms good and evil and their eternal contrast become unmeaning. Hence it is that Theists and Atheists alike reason consistently with the premises which they set out from, and the controversy rises up into that upper region of first principles and *à priori* postulates where the conscience has free play, and man is a law unto himself.

Dogmatic divines are here seriously to blame for their suicidal distrust of what they describe as the intuition Theology. The two classes who hold by an infallible Book, and those who fall back on an infallible Church, alike regard with ill-disguised suspicion the intuitional school; they forget that but for these instinctive goings

forth of the soul after goodness, we should be simply incapable of any consciousness of God, who is the Supreme God. Again, they forget that without a conscience, which is a law unto itself, no amount of dogmatic teaching would impress us with a sense of One who is the fountain and source of that law within. Divines, in a word, in denouncing the intuitional school of morals, are guilty of the inconsistency of calling a witness into court and then stopping his mouth, or bidding him sit down. We must either believe in the *testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ* or not: we cannot combine opposites.

The Jesuits have tried to erect a strong house of authority by discarding all support for conscience by the interior light, and we know the result of their teaching. There is no Atheism so desolating as that of those who have been taught that all is evil in man, unless what he has learned on the lap of the Church.

Idolatry of old phrases somewhat musty, or, as Bacon would call it, of the idols of the forum, is one of the dangers of Theology in its controversy with modern science. The weapons of the past are out of date, and we must recast our very conceptions of the Being of God and His relation to creation as continuous, not occasional, if we would be abreast of science. We must, moreover, set out from a monistic, not a dualistic standpoint, and regard creation as continuous and without gaps, not a succession of fresh starts of creative energy, as in the Hindu myth of Brahm awaking from a long sleep of ages only to relapse into that sleep of Nirvana again. It is by the light of the doctrine of the Trinity that we should be directed to retrace our conceptions of creation. The Deity is Will, Word, and Work, or the process between an Idea and its intelligent execution, which we describe as Spirit. Such has been the going forth out of those abysmal depths, which we

call Deity, into nature which is His workmanship. What we call the Incarnation is thus a manifestation of God, unique in one sense but not in another. The Schoolmen first raised the question, on which Thomists and Scotists took sides for and against, as to whether without a Fall there would have arisen any necessity for the Incarnation. Their mode of approaching such a question must have been erroneous, or they would have seen the folly of assuming an element of contingency at all in the divine dealings. Whatever God doeth, He doeth it for ever. Hence it argues a kind of obtuseness to the fundamental conception of a Deity, to suppose Him to be surprised or disturbed in His plans, or compelled to modify them as inferior artists must. Evil is no accident, much less a surprise to the great All-good. It is something more, it is true, else it would not be evil, than the process on to a higher good—the shadow out of which the light of a higher spiritual freedom emerges. But what that something more is, we shall only know when we reach the eternal world, and know the true meaning of heaven and hell, concerning which there are all shades of meaning, from the crudest materialism to the most attenuated spiritualism.

Hence it is, that as creation is continuous and for ever, so at all its stages it is the operation of the Eternal Will, the Eternal Word, and the Eternal Spirit, the primal, the efficient, and the final cause of all things. Hence we see that with an increasing manifestation of God we must reach the stage at which a being is to appear on the scene made in God's image and after His likeness. It is out of this conception of man's spiritual dignity that the Incarnation follows as a necessary sequel. This being who for some reason has failed to reflect God's image and likeness, must be led on to realize his high destiny which is

God's design, unless God is to fail of His purposes. In this way we have succeeded in finding the missing link between creation and redemption, which is not arbitrary as in the old Theology, but necessary, and resulting from the perfections of God. The old Deism, which was the substratum of the old Theology, having lost its force, we must seek a new ground-principle on which to rest the Theology of the future, and this we find in that conception of God which describes Him as the hidden centre of force, the ultimate source of a threefold manifestation, which is Light, Life, and Love, according as it rises in the scale of being from matter to mind. This which we call a Trinitarian view of creation as contrasted with a mere Deistic, would go far to reconcile to many minds this mystery of mysteries, the Christian doctrine of Incarnation and the Trinity.

The Theology of the future must combine in one, and so resolve in a higher generalization that distinction between natural religion, based on what is known as the truths of Theism common to all mankind, and revealed religion, based on those higher mysteries which are peculiar to the Christian revelation. This contrast, like that between natural and supernatural, will not stand the test of modern criticism, since all revelation implies nature, and the natural leads up to a revelation as its goal and ultimatum. We cannot put reason and faith in this way into separate compartments of thought, and throw open the former only to free inquiry, while we regard the latter as a kind of sacred enclosure into which reason is not to enter at all, or only under certain limitations of its free exercise which are fatal to its very existence as reason. All these forced contrasts are things of the past. It is harsh and arbitrary to lay down the existence of one Supreme Being, God, as the basis of all sound thinking, and

yet to say in the same breath that we can know nothing apart from revelation of the mode of His existence. Unless God has already revealed Himself *in* us, we do not see how He can reveal Himself afterwards *to* us. If the age is agnostic, it is because theologians have pointed the downward path by denying that God is knowable at all by the light of our interior consciousness. This agnostic temper of indifference to all higher mysteries is a warning to ourselves that perhaps something is wrong in our own modes of apprehension of truth, and that our very conceptions of the Divine Being need revision. Divines of the old school speak much too confidently of the Being and Attributes of God as if certain qualities of the Godhead were inherent in our very conception of the Great Supreme, and others were not. In this vain distinction between the natural and revealed character of God, the old Theology made its first downward step into error, and any correction of Theology must begin at this point, to which we now turn.

The excuse for theologians using such an expression at all of God as His "attributes" is, that it seems an equivalent to that grand old Hebrew phrase, the "name" of Jehovah, such as it was proclaimed to Moses. But is it so? Here it is that the old Theology laid itself open to attack from borrowing its conceptions of God from a dry and scholastic Deism now defunct. These so-called attributes of God are, as the term truly implies, mere abstractions taken from an imperfect draft of human nature, and applied to the divine nature inconsiderately, as if there were no middle point between describing God as a Being altogether such as we are, or altogether unlike us. We forget that when we predicate infinity, we at once take a Being out of the limitations under which character is formed, at least as far as we know of moral agents at all. More than this, as Kant points out, we

are involved in contradiction even in attributing will to the Supreme Being. "For I have this conception only," he adds, "in so far as I derive it from my inner experience, and thereby from the dependence of my satisfaction from objects whose existence we require. But at the foundation of this lies sensibility, which wholly contradicts the pure conception of a Supreme Being. The objections of Hume to Deism are weak, touching no more than the proofs, and never the proposition of the deistic assertion itself. But as regards Theism, which must be arrived at by a closer determination of our merely transcendent conception of the Supreme Being, they are very strong, and according as the conception is constructed in certain, indeed in all ordinary cases, are irrefragable." [1]

Such, then, being our limitations of thought, we must be careful how we limit the Holy One. It would be better not to speak of Him at all than to speak of Him as partial, unjust, vindictive; as old Plutarch reasoned, it were better that men should say there was no such man as Plutarch, than to say that Plutarch is a man inconstant, fickle, easily moved to anger, revengeful for small provocations, vexed at small things. "When Timanthes," he adds, "at Athens was singing a hymn to Artemis, and calling her 'wild runner, fanatic, mad, infuriated,' Cinesias, the songmaker, got up from among the audience, and cried, Mayest thou have a daughter like her." [2]

The lesson to us is to be slow to attribute to God qualities which we should be ashamed of even in a man. This lesson, we remark with regret, has even yet to be learned by theologians. Calvin seemed to suppose that the bare predication of omnipotence to God had the effect

[1] *Vid.* Kant's *Prolegomena*, sec. 57, p. 105, Eng. trans.
[2] *Vid.* Plutarch, *Superstition.*

of turning qualities which we should regard as beneath man's dignity into attributes worthy of the all-blessed One. It is a strange confusion of thought arising from divines putting the majesty of God above His moral qualities. They argue that a thing is right because commanded, instead of commanded because right. They begin at the wrong end; and if the conclusion which they arrive at is repulsive to our deepest instincts of right and wrong, it is too late to invoke the divine Sovereignty to cover over the confusion of our reasoning.

Discarding, then, the term attributes as an unworthy and all too anthropomorphic way of speaking of the Great Supreme, Theology should revert to the grand old Hebrew equivalent for the Being of God, His name. The name Jehovah is "He who was, who is, and is to come," who is wisdom, power, love, all three, and three in one, these qualities coexisting in such a way that we cannot conceive of His power as acting at all except under the direction of wisdom and love. Such a Being will be no longer regarded by us as the Almighty of the Theist, much less as the God who, according to theologians, is a God in Christ to some, and a God out of Christ to others. Language like this is only not impious, because the good people who use it mean no impiety by it. What they mean by the phrase is the weak though well-meant attempt to impress on others that if we do not accept the God who is in Christ, we shall have to face the bar of the terrible God who out of Christ is a consuming fire. In the fresco of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel, the Christ of the Gospels is depicted as a Jupiter Tonans, who can only be propitiated by His virgin mother. Our Reformed theologians stop short of this, but the difference is only one of degree. They hold rather that the Father is conciliated by the Son, instead of the Son by the

virgin mother. But the mode of thinking is the same in both cases. Its root principle is a coarse mode of terrorism which, if it startles minds in a certain stage of sensual slumber, can go no farther than this, and then leaves them a prey to deeper doubts than ever. Happily this mode of representing the divine character has almost disappeared from the pulpit, and we shall be only thrice slaying our slain if we return to it again. But the root of the mistake, which is all we have to deal with at present, lies in that old habit of theologians in defining what they are pleased to describe as God's attributes. Even "Person," a phrase which we use of the Trinity, is only an accommodation at best arising from the infirmity of speech how to touch an ineffable mystery. But all these misunderstandings arising from the Latin phrase Persona, or its Greek equivalent Hypostasis, are light in comparison to those errors which spring from this phrase of modern divines, "the attributes of God." Attribution is in logic the converse of distribution, and is a form of definition. But we forget that to define we must first know the thing which we are dealing with. This at once convicts of presumption those who describe the Divine Being as if we were admitted into the secrets of the presence chamber. Such is not true reverence.

If Theology is to be regarded as a term with any meaning, it must rise above that cold and philosophical abstraction known as Theism. Divines must recast their expressions, and not invent a *caput mortuum*, known as natural religion, which is supposed to be at the base of another *caput mortuum*, which we describe as revealed religion. These contrasts, which were current in the age of Deism, must disappear with that age. The rubbish of the old building must be removed, as Wren did in the case of the rebuilding of St. Paul's, before we proceed to reconstruct that true temple of the living

Jehovah, which may be said to need no light of the sun of reason, neither of the moon of fancy to shine on it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The Theology of the future will have to efface the distinction between natural and revealed religion, and also to get beyond these contrasts between God in creation and God in redemption, the natural and the supernatural, which were the landmarks of last century. All such distinctions are out of date in our day, when Rationalism on one side and Spiritualism on the other call out for a freer intercourse between the lower world of sense and the higher world of spirit. A far-off God, acting directly in the past by miracles, and in the present only indirectly and through general laws, this was the reigning idea of the eighteenth century Theology. The reigning idea of the nineteenth century is so different, that to fall back on the apologetics of that age, or even to borrow its theological phrases, is like going into battle with old weapons out of date and rusty. The authors of the *Unseen Universe* have pointed this out more clearly than any other writers we can name. "The truth is," as they observe, "that science and religion neither are nor can be two fields of knowledge, with no possible communication between them. Such an hypothesis is simply absurd. There is undoubtedly an avenue leading from the one to the other, but this avenue is through the unseen universe, and unfortunately it has been walled up and ticketed with *No road this way,* professedly alike in the name of science at one end, and in the name of religion at the other." To open that way, even if as a *Bahn-brecher,* is the object of this work. We may not succeed, but we shall at least clear the way for those who are to follow, and who will break down the middle wall of partition between science and faith. No

conception of God which is unscientific can hold its ground finally and for ever even among religious minds. On the other hand, no conception of the universe which shuts out the thought of a spiritual centre of all things can hold its ground finally and for ever among scientific men. The old Theism, which was more of a philosophy than a faith, and which rested on Dualism, not on Monism, must be given up if a reconciliation is to take place. At present, religious minds cling to Theism, as they see no alternative but this from a Pantheism finally dying down to Positivism. But this is our error and mistake. It arises from a contracted view of the question. The universe is, in the eyes of science only, a vast battery of forces passing one into the other, as light, life, and lastly self-consciousness rising into love. This is all that we ask, for this is the ground of the new Theism. To use the term Force is to concede the whole point in question. This is the fulcrum of our lever, on which we lift the world on to a new plane of spiritual thought. Light, life, love—in the passage upward of these, the one up to the other, we have the shadow on the dial of that truth which, in the Scriptures of truth, is the Son proceeding from the Father, and the Spirit from the Son. A triune God is a necessity thus of science as much as of faith.

CHAPTER IV.

OF MIRACLES AS PROPHECIES.

If the old Deism is a dead giant, slain, as we have seen is the case, by the sling-stone of Kant's *Kritik*, we may infer reasonably enough that discussions which spring out of Deism, such as the relation of miracles to a reign of law, should disappear with the Deism which gave rise to them. As the age is no longer a Deistic age at all, why raise the discussion which divided the Deists of last century into naturalists and supernaturalists? We should gladly then pass by the question of miracles altogether, holding, as we do, that as each age has its own scientific conceptions, so its Theology must from time to time be reconstructed in harmony with those conceptions. The day is probably not far distant when many of the objections to miracles will disappear with the apologies for miracles by which they were buttressed up. Attack and defence will thus come to an end together, when we cease to use the old contrasts between the natural and the supernatural. Indeed, the success of such a work as the *Reign of Law in the Spiritual World* leads us to see how much leeway has to be made up before science and Theology can melt into one. The book is either a truism or a paradox. If the author only means to say that there prevails a reign of law in the spiritual world, as also in the lower world of nature, we thank him for

nothing. Even those who use such a phrase as the "dynamics of prayer," only mean that in some way prayer sets in motion unknown forces in the universe. On the other hand, if the author means that the *same* laws reign throughout, this is a paradox. Chemical affinity is not the same law as that of life, but its exact contrary. The definition of life, indeed, is the power of holding this chemical affinity in suspense. Hence the "reign of law in the spiritual world" leads us no farther than the old analogy argument, from certain phenomena in the lower to that of the higher world, which is true to a great extent, since *similar* laws, not *same* laws, should proceed from God if He be the one Ruler of the universe. But the question of miracles lies deeper than this. The difficulty will disappear of itself when the age has been brought to see that either there is no God at all, or that He must be all in all. Hence it is that we offer no *rationale* of miracles, holding, as we do, that the time has not come for this. We can at best hold out a kind of a Concordat, which is of no more logical value than that of Faraday, who seems to have placed his reason and his faith as if in distinct lobes of his brain, and trusted to some future light, which should break on the question, perhaps in the future life. For the present, all we can say is, that the old *rationale* of miracles, which satisfied the orthodox in the days of Deism, and which with many modifications is substantially repeated to this day, is now quite out of date. In our day no educated mind could speak of a miracle as a violation of the laws of nature. We even shrink from the phrase, a suspension of the laws of matter. The favourite mode of representing miracles in orthodox circles is, as the anticipation of some higher law, as part of a redemption scheme by which all things are to be

made new. It is the restitution of all things to their original and ideal perfection, before death and disease had entered the world. We have nothing to say against this anticipative view of miracles. They may be in this sense prophecies in deed, as Christ's teaching was a prophecy in word of good things to come. But it is only too clear that this view of miracles leaves them thus, so to speak, in the air. They are either regarded as solitary events in a far-off past, and out of harmony with all that we know of the laws of the universe in the present, or, as in the other view, they are bare anticipations of some law as yet undiscovered in the future. In either case, whether they belong to the past or to the future, they are out of harmony with what we know of the reign of law in the present. So much is this felt by the orthodox of all schools, that the Christian argument has silently shifted its centre of gravity during the last half century. The latest illustration of this is the removal of Paley's *Evidences* from the place of honour which it held in the curriculum of Cambridge, where Paley's *Utilitarian Ethics,* and Paley's matter-of-fact *Jury-box Evidences,* naturally held their ground longer than at Oxford or any of the Scotch Universities. Instead of our religion resting on miracles, as Paley put it, it is the miracles which rest on the general credit of the religion itself. We now can see the reasonableness of Christ's miracles, because His unique Personality was the miracle of miracles; and until we can account for a Galilean peasant attaining that wisdom, we feel comparatively little difficulty in accounting for His making the lame to walk and the blind to see.

From the Deistic standpoint, indeed, a miracle is conceivable or not, according as we have grasped the idea of the Reign of Law or not. Paley went a great

deal too far when he said that, admitting a Personal Ruler of the universe, the whole question of His suspending the laws of the universe resolves itself into a question of testimony. A miracle is thus no more than an extraordinary class of facts, resting on better evidence than any ordinary fact, and so he boldly faces the two horns of Hume's dilemma, and says it is more probable that a miracle should be true than that such unimpeachable testimony should be false. But the age has left behind alike Hume and his opponents. We are no longer at the standpoint of Deism, hence the old contrast between the natural and the supernatural should vex us no longer. On the contrary, all that our new conception of the reign of law in the universe seems to point to is, that there are forces latent at present, the result of which would, if suddenly let loose and developed, compel us to cry out—a miracle. As a matter of fact, science comes on us with feet shod with wool, as Nemesis in the Greek symbol, so silently, though swiftly, that we pass through the phase of wonder into that of the higher law, without allowing ourselves time to utter the adoring word, and to say this is the finger of God. We may take the telephone as the latest instance of our being able to evoke forces latent in matter. It has been generalized on so rapidly, and the subtle laws of the conduction of sound by the same channel as light have been reached, as it were, at a bound, and as a result we at once class it among other phenomena which fall under the general reign of law. The telephone has passed over with the telegraph into the class of things which, if beyond sense-perception, are not beyond science. But there still remains "telepathy," or the mysterious action in some way of one will on another acting through a medium and at a distance. Is it too much to suppose

that telepathy will some day or other follow the course of the telegraph and the telephone in passing over from the occult side of science to that which is law-regulated. On this supposition we base our theory of miracles. They are anticipations of the latent forces of the universe not yet evoked by man. "We see not yet all things put under man." As yet he is in his minority, and not lord of the universe. All its laws do not yield to his touch—all its hidden forces are not summoned by the Prospero wand of science. "But we see Jesus"—in the model man, the archetype Adam—all was subject to His will, but only on account of His profound subjection to His Father's will. He walked on the sea and rebuked the winds—at His word disease paled, and death dropped its prey. For why? not merely because, as the orthodox hold, He was the lord of the dead and the living, but also because as the representative man He was to foreshadow in His own person all that reign of man over nature which is only, when rightly considered, and under the limitations of the case, another name for the reign of law. It is a childish conception of a miracle to represent it as a mere display of power, a freak of omnipotence. In this sense it is as impossible for our age to believe again in miracles of this kind as in a Jupiter Tonans with the thunderbolt as his doomster. Until the question of miracles is removed altogether from the region of mere marvels, and they are given their signacular character as prophecies of a millennial reign of man as God's vicegerent on earth, there will be a standing dispute between our reason and our faith. We may gloss over this difference by compromises, but the inward bruise is not healed by *parmaceti* of this kind. It breaks out again, and the ulcer of the new Rationalism in the end will become worse than that of the old.

What then, it will be asked, is the remedy, and is there any? None, as we think, but in facing the facts of the case, and removing the dead wood of old Deism, with its contrasts between natural and supernatural. It is this Deism, with its dogmatic contrasts between some things within law and others above or beyond it, which is the mother of heresies and the fountain of unbelief. We must have no reserve as to the reign of law—"For ever Thy word is settled in heaven."

But then, again, there are no limits that we can see to the potentiality of will in the universe, or in other words, of the reign of mind over matter. A new force, we call it electricity, causes particles of carbon to fly off and to fuse in a blaze that we call the electric light. At any day we may light on the force which shall crystallize carbon so as to make a diamond. Where is this to stop? Are we outside the bounds of the natural, and already beyond the *flammantia mœnia mundi* in the supernatural? Apparently so; and yet how idle this distinction! What is to-day a miracle may be to-morrow a market produce. Hence we say of these prophecies of a science yet unborn,—

> "They might not seem his prophecies,
> But spiritual presentiments,
> And that refraction of events
> Which often rises ere they rise."

This is the true and only *rationale* of miracles. They are unspoken prophecies, spiritual presentiments of a reign of law and a reign of man, when God shall be all in all, and our misleading and only verbal dualisms between science and faith, mind and matter, shall be swallowed up in the one great universal synthesis,—

> "One God, one law, one element."

With this glance at miracles we close our discussion of the Being of God. Deism, or the bald conception of a God who governs the world *ab extra*, is now defunct. Hence if we reject revelation we are driven to the dreary alternative of a poetic and nature-worshipping Pantheism of the Shelley type; or, still worse, of a world-will, as Schopenhauer has called it, that rises slowly into consciousness at last in man. Turning from these two refuges from blank Atheism, all that remains is to believe in the God of revelation, whose three manifestations, corresponding to His trinal Being, are Light, Life, Love. As light He is the fountain of all force, and the universe, which is only a vast battery of force, is thus full of the presence of God. Again, as life He is the fountain of all being, from the plant to man, rising up in slow stages of nerve-consciousness, till in man we see reason rounded into an orbit of self-consciousness. Nor does the process stop there. He is also love, as well as light and life. By that we mean that when life becomes self-conscious, it would be misery could it find no object worthy of its love. This is what the old Book means by the phrase, that for Adam there was not found an help-meet for him. It is the mystery of love ever since, of love losing itself in another, and so finding itself. None but those who love know what it is so to lose, and find the old self in a new. All this is answered in that other mystery, a God in Christ, that the Father loveth the Son, and that the Son manifests the Father through the Spirit. Hence we hold that the new Theology must be Trinitarian, or it must cease to be a Theology at all. With Deism, Unitarianism also disappears, the greater heresy swallowing up the less. There is no future for thought in the Being of God, unless on the lines of Pantheism, *i.e.* the co-eternity of God and the universe, the universe

being the eternal Son to the eternal Father; or of orthodox Trinitarianism, in which the eternal Father and the eternal Son have existed in and through the eternal Spirit in unbroken communion before the world was. Hence the purpose of creation was the manifestation of this triune God; and as all evil is only the instrument for the production of higher good, man and his fall became the platform for a higher manifestation still, which we call redemption. Thus creation and redemption are in reality only stages of one great process, which is the successive manifestation of God as Light, Life, Love, or as we say in the language of Scripture, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Theism, which is not triune, is thus no Theism at all, but a mere idol of the tribe, to perish as all idols must.

CHAPTER V.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

Among the lost truths which the new Theology has recovered from oblivion, there is perhaps none so central and none so vital as that of the Fatherhood of God; it is the keystone of the arch on which the whole Theology of the coming age is to spring up. The different points of view in which the old Theology regarded this truth are not to be explained away as mere differences of degree. Divines, for instance, like the late Dr. Candlish, would admit in a certain adoptive sense the Fatherhood of God for those who were grafted by a living faith into union with the Father through the Son; but it was of the eternal Son alone that they predicated true sonship. Men were only sons of God in a certain relative and derived sense. It was only after their conversion, and in virtue of regeneration through water and the Holy Ghost, that they entered, not by birthright at all, but only by adoption into the divine family, and so became heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.[1] In a word, it was only an adoptive, not a real sonship; it had no relation to their original constitution in the image of God,

[1] It may be remarked that this modern type of Adoptionism is not unlike the theory of those Spanish bishops of the eighth century who held that Christ was according to His Godhead a true Son of the Father, but according to His manhood only an adopted. This western type of Nestorianism was condemned by the Council of Frankfort in 814 A.D.

but began with the new covenant relation which they entered on at their conversion.

It is needless to point out that between this teaching and that of the general Fatherhood of God there is a difference too deep to be bridged over by a few phrases of accommodation. To get down to the true conception of the Fatherhood of God and of man's original relationship of sonship, we must get beyond the old Deistic conception of creation. When we meet with a being breathing thoughtful breath, we come to the last term in the ascending scale of Naturalism. We must abandon the old point of view, and take our stand on a new class of conceptions. We are now launched on a new order of existence, which we must describe as the spiritual order, and the old governmental conceptions of God dealing with man as His creature and setting up one and putting down another, must give place to a new class of conceptions.

In a word, the "ruling ideas" of our age with regard to man's original relationship to God are changed with the change of the age of Deism. Our sense of God is immanent now, not merely transcendental, and hence it is no light and secondary matter whether we proclaim the name of Jehovah as the Father of all men or as the Father only of those that believe, and in their case only by adoption. Men of compromise seek some way of reconciling these two conceptions, and so bridging over the contrast. But they must fail, since the point of departure is fundamentally different in the two cases. The general Fatherhood of God is either no truth at all, or it is a truth of such moment that it calls for a reconstruction of the whole of Theology. It is intolerant, as all ruling ideas are, of such mere adjustments as will admit of two divergent theories being held with a certain

reserve of both. The Salamanca doctors, who taught what they called natural philosophy, laid down the dictum that nature as a rule abhorred a vacuum, and hence water rose in a pump in obedience to this "abhorrence;" but that beyond a limit of thirty-two feet the abhorrence ceased in the case of water. Such is the compromise which some attempt between the old and new school on the subject of the Fatherhood of God. To say that He is the Maker and Judge of all men, and then enters into a new relationship with a favoured few, and which by a fiction of Roman law known as adoption we may call Fatherhood, this was as far as the old school was prepared to go on this subject. But the new school carry this conception of Fatherhood as far back as the original constitution of men as made in the image and likeness of God. They make this the base line of their whole Theology. As a building, it stands or falls with the foundation on which it rests; and this being so, it behoves us to see whether that foundation is stable, and whether it will bear the weight of the superstructure laid on it.

We turn then to this point and ask ourselves on what scriptural support we base the statement that all men are originally, and by their very birth into the world, and as beings breathing thoughtful breath, entitled to look up and address God as Abba, Father. It is no objection to this truth that mankind in its present fallen state is unconscious of its high original, and that unlike the pattern man, the second Adam, he is unable to say that he comes from God and goes to God. Every day we meet with men living below their privileges, heirs but outcasts, and we only pity them the more when we contrast what they are with what they ought to be. We have no right to base a Theology on the low ground of man's slavish fears and

distrust of his heavenly Father. It comes with bad grace in those who deny our right to base a Theology on man's spiritual intuitions, to argue from the absence of these intuitions in the case of savages who are only half human at best. Men may be either brutalized by long barbarism or sensualized by living as some of our would-be scientists do, exclusively in a world of things which can be seen and handled. Divines who reason in this way fail to see that it is not easy to prove a negative. They actually appeal to man's consciousness not at its best, but at its worst state. They land like sailors on the shores of an unexplored country, see a barren region before them, and report home that all is barren.

It is not in this way that we can fairly deal with the question of man's original sonship. The apostle, in addressing cultured Athenians on Mars Hill, did not appeal to men at their worst but at their best. He took a statement from one of the most spiritual of the later Greek poets, after philosophy had purified the conceptions of Godhead from the grossness of anthropomorphism which made the Homeric poems, as Plato complained of, such corrupters of morals. The usual line of argument of divines of the old dogmatic school has been to assert the necessity of a revelation from the utter defect of the inner light in men; but they forget that this kind of argument if pushed too far becomes self-contradictory, since, if men are without the spiritual faculty altogether, how can we appeal to it? Hence with charming inconsistency divines make use of this kind of compromise. They appeal to man's spiritual consciousness to vouch for the *à priori* need of a revelation, but shrink from applying this verifying faculty to test the contents of that revelation when given. They are in such fear of conscience being raised up to a co-ordinate rank with the

Bible, that they fall into a double inconsistency: first, they call in conscience to attest by its very blindness for the need of a revelation, and then set aside that conscience when it dares to demur to any of the inferences which divines have drawn with regard to God's plan of redemption.

We must cut away all these inconsistencies by laying down at once the position on which we take our stand. It is this, that a spiritual Theology presupposes as its basis a spiritual philosophy. The old school of divines made the mistake of erecting a superstructure of theological truth on the shaking foundations of utilitarian morals. The prudential view of an appeal to self-interest to believe and be saved may be the threshold of the moral and spiritual, as Coleridge tried to show in his *Aids to Reflection;* but the prudential can never raise us above its own level. Appeals to self-interest are not to be despised in religion, since unless I am true to my own self-interest, how can I be true to higher interests which are out of my keeping? In this sense he that is faithful in the least will be faithful also in much. But it is also true that to get at a spiritual religion, we must set out with a spiritual philosophy. It is in religion as in commerce, he who would get the wealth of the Indies must set out with that wealth. In all exchange there is profit; but we must have something to begin with in the first instance.

We must set out, then, by postulating a spiritual psychology as the basis of a spiritual Theology. We must look out for some element in man's nature in which soul, or our intellectual self, is sublimated into spirit, and which is as much above self-consciousness as sense is below it. In this upper air of God-consciousness there is borne in us instinctively the sense that we too are

His offspring. The remark of an American writer is here very much to the point: "According to the gospel of the spirit, Adam is the son of God; according to the gospel of the senses, man is the son of an atom. The two genealogies become contradictory only as either is regarded as the sole account of the descent of man."[1] There need be, and indeed there is, no contradiction between these two tables of man's descent and ascent. But we must set out from this position, or else all attempts at any later point of men's history to bring in the sense of his being a partaker of the divine nature lead to lamentable contradictions.

Here it is that the old Theology is at fault. It was so desirous to emphasize the contrast between creature and Creator, that it at last lowered man to the point where it seems only figurative language to speak of him as made in the divine image. To the old Theology it seemed bordering on Pantheism to be told of our birth as a sleep and of "those trailing clouds of glory which come from God who is our home." In the oldest Theology of all, that of the Alexandrian Fathers, this doctrine is not effaced. But the struggle for life which Christianity waged with Neo-Platonism in Alexandria in the third and fourth centuries led to a fierce reaction of dogma, when Christianity prevailed over philosophy, and the schools of philosophy were finally closed. The victors paid a dear price for their victory in the pitiless proscription which they ordered of the very philosophy which had once been the foster-mother, if not the true mother, of the infant Church. The result of this proscription of Platonism was a hard and external contrast between nature and grace, the Church and the world. The borderland between the two was treated not as a neutral zone to be respected

[1] *Vid. The Religious Teaching: a Study from Faith*, by Newman Smyth, author of *Old Faith in a New Light*.

by both, but as the marches of an enemy's country to be held down by a military garrison and raided over in order to exterminate the last of the old inhabitants. The result was, that such a truth as this of the general Fatherhood of God and of our filial relation to Him was treated as a dangerous opinion, opening the door to the entry of the old idolatry. This narrow psychology gave a tone in the West, and decided the course of its Theology, in which the distinction between psyche and pneuma, for which the Latin tongue had no precise equivalent, was regarded as merely verbal and amounting to nothing. Nor did the loss end there; it tended to contract into a single channel the theological conceptions of the whole West, which laid almost exclusive stress on certain forensic and federal conceptions which, whether true or false (we do not discuss that here), had at least no root in the deeper relations of human nature, but were derived from the arbitrary arrangements of Roman law and life. Such is the tribute which psychology exacts from Theology. We cannot with impunity pass by its essential truths. Man being made in the image of God, we cannot make an imperfect draft of human nature without its reacting on our conceptions of the divine nature. The result has been that during the whole of what we may call the Augustinian age of Theology, which has reigned without a rival in the West for fourteen centuries, the Divine Fatherhood has been virtually a lost truth.

We do not, of course, imply that the Western Church ceased to hold the fatherly character of God, but it dropped out of its pre-eminence as a primary, and was held as a secondary and derived truth. Men became sons of God after and as the result of the new birth; they were not entitled to that new birth in virtue of original sonship. Hence it is, that for want of a sense of

the true doctrine of Fatherhood, baptism itself lost its true and primary significance. It was turned into something magical and external, a kind of charm, a *viaticum* at the opening of the journey of life, as the other sacrament was conceived to be a *viaticum* to begin our journey into the unseen world. All these unrealities of the sacramental school might have been avoided, if the true and primitive idea of baptism had not been distorted by a false and semi-Manichæan conception of birth-sin. Infants were baptized not to declare that they *are* fit subjects of the kingdom of heaven, but in order to make them so. The signacular character of baptism, which is its true virtue as a sacrament, was replaced by a kind of *opus operatum* theory. The baby which was supposed to have come into the world with some birth-taint which was more than human, and even diabolic in its malignity, could only enter the Christian covenant by the lustral water touching its brow, and after, as in the later Roman ritual, salt and oil had been applied to exorcise demons who had polluted in some way the very fountain of our being. So it was that a mystical conception of original sin led to a magical conception of regeneration, and as is always the case, one error confirmed and strengthened the other.

Hence it is that a return to the true conception of God's Fatherhood disposes at once of these assertions of later Theology. That we are born into the world "children of wrath," and naturally exposed to His displeasure here as well as to eternal damnation hereafter, is one of those hasty inferences of theology from a few texts uncritically pieced together. The two passages in the Ephesians and the Colossians which are said to prove it, only suggest, as we read the expression τέκνα ὀργῆς, not that we are objectively the children of God's wrath, but only subjectively of a wrathful disposition. This

genitive of the quality is a well-known Hebraism, which the commentators in most cases better read in Greek than Hebrew scholarship have overlooked. Assuming, then, uncritically that we are the *objects* of God's wrath, and not merely the *subjects* of our own passionate disposition, divines mistook the true meaning of ὀργή, which is a phrase descriptive of violent sensual passion, and unfit to apply to the great and holy God. Hence, on an uncritical interpretation of this phrase, there grew up a Theology commonly known as Augustinian, and built upon a material view of original sin and its descent by generation. Half-Manichæan in its origin, the laity readily embraced it, as it fell in with their slavish sensuous thoughts of God and the eternal world: the clerical order naturally made much of it, as it magnified the importance of their ministrations. It exalted clericalism, and made the sacramental reception of grace through one of the sacerdotal caste an essential condition for admission into the kingdom of heaven. The Pietist party, it is true, as much before the Reformation as after, have uniformly protested against all sacerdotalism, and with it have rejected much of the mischievous errors of sacramentalism. But their protest has generally been feeble and one-sided, because they did not set up some counter truth to this error or exaggeration of the taint of birth-sin. Had they affirmed the general Fatherhood of God, infant baptism would have returned to its true meaning as a tender and expressive rite, signifying not the guilt, but the innocence of childhood.

But in that case the formal Theology of the Pietist school would have been fundamentally different from what it is, and baptism would have acquired a deeper meaning as a declaratory act on God's part, and an act of dedication on the part of the parents.

Again, how different would be our motive for missions if the general Fatherhood of God became the keynote of Theology, as it ultimately will be! Instead of a mere society for saving souls from some unknown peril in the future, the missionary Church would become a great educational instrument, leading men on from a lower to a higher platform of truth. It is not unimportant to glance at some of the bearings of the question. At present, under the current notion that life is a state of probation, it is held inconsistently enough to be no probation at all to the majority who are the slaves of habit, and who live and die under hereditary beliefs which they have neither will nor desire to shake off. But the conception of the education of the human race is slowly gaining ground, and gradually displacing the old conception of life as a state of probation. The latter is unmeaning and even self-contradictory, since, if original sin has decided the fate of the race, how can we speak of life as a state of probation? On the other hand, if there is any room for the formation of moral character, the extreme dogma of a birth-taint derived from our first parents becomes untenable. We may thus leave Pelagians and Augustinians, Arminians and Calvinists, to answer each other. Their doctrines are mutually exclusive, and the popular Theology which tries to combine the two is reduced to a mass of contradictions. On these grounds, instead of the phrase, a state of probation, we lean to the educational theory of life. Ever since Lessing's well-known tract on the education of the human race, this summary of the philosophy of history, based as it is on the argument of the apostle in the Epistle to the Galatians, has been gradually displacing the probation theory of life in all thoughtful minds. It explains the facts of the case, and minimizes the apparent harshness of God

in seeming to pass by some races, and His seeming favouritism in making others His chosen vessels. National election has this advantage over the same doctrine of election as limited to individuals, that it does no violence to our moral instincts. As a nation, in a sense, has no day of judgment, so its election to privilege is clearly no matter of favour with regard to the future life. The Jew is called into the kingdom of heaven first, and then the Gentile; and even if the Jew is for the time cut off and the Gentile grafted in his place, we know that it is only for a time, and that ultimately God will have mercy upon all.

On these grounds we incline to take that view of life which teaches that all the world is a school, and all the men and women merely scholars, seated on higher or lower forms, and set to tasks light or easy according to their standing in the school. This harmonizes with our conceptions of the Fatherhood of God, which the doctrine of probation certainly does not. It is no objection to it that at present in the case of the majority of mankind there is little or no sense of sonship on their part, and no desire apparently on God's part to lead them on to a sense of His Fatherhood. This is only what we see every day in life where sons are undutiful and parents consequently estranged from them, but we are none the less convinced of the sacredness of the parental tie. We are sure, in spite of these lapses on both sides, that the family is a divine institution; hence if the family is so sacred on earth—

> "For there are spun
> Around the heart such tender ties,
> That our own children in our eyes
> Are dearer than the sun,"

much more must this be true of Him of whom the

whole family, or rather all family relationship in heaven and earth, is named. We do wrong to ourselves when we approach God with any name less dear and tender than that of Abba our Father. If it is our privilege to draw near at all with such a claim, it is surely our duty to do so. Since the privilege carries with it a corresponding duty, it must be a false humility to say on the one hand, that God is our Father, and yet to stand aloof as if it were presumption to take God at His word. This is not humility at all, but that unbelief which excuses itself under the plea that God is not an indulgent Father, but an austere taskmaster. It is to make God a liar so to dishonour Him by denying the tenderest and dearest relationship which can exist between us and Him. "If I then be a Father, where is my honour?"—this is God's plea with us, and we are bound to hear it and act on it.

Thus it is that a spiritual psychology calls for a spiritual Theology as its correlative. So long as the old Theology was content to think of man as the Cartesian school did, as body and soul only, this dualism of man's nature was met by a dual relationship of God as the Creator of our bodies and the moral Ruler of our intelligent and moral nature. But if there be a triad in man's nature, if there be an inner consciousness as much beneath that of self as self is beneath that of sense, this seems to postulate a new relationship of God to us, for which we have only one adequate phrase, that He is the Father of our spirits. As in the Jewish temple and tabernacle alike there were three approaches,—an outer court, a priests' court, and a holy of holies,—so corresponding each to each is the body, soul, and spirit of man. Hence there must be some special relationship of God with these three parts of our nature. We rise, in the

words of an old writer, *ab exterioribus ad interiora, ab interioribus ad superiora,* and at each advance our relationship to God becomes deeper and more clearly marked. He is the Maker and Preserver of our bodies, the King and Judge of our souls, and so to our spirits what term can we apply but that of Fatherhood? Here the creaturely relation is not lost, but absorbed in something deeper and more tender. Do we lose the sense of reverence and dependence under this advance in privilege? Quite the contrary. It is no mere Pantheistic sense of emanation by which our spirits are said to come from God, who is our Home. The Christian is still the servant of Jehovah, nay more, as we see in the one perfect Son, His perfection of Sonship is that which gave perfection to His service. The higher relationship, so far from annulling the lower, actually gives dignity and meaning to it. Man, who is God's creature as to his body, and his servant as to his soul, becomes a son as to his spirit, and in each stage of this ascending scale of privilege, the higher takes up the lower into itself, and instead of annulling it, gives it a depth of meaning it had not before. Man is not less God's creature, but infinitely more so than the cattle of the field, because he is also conscious of a higher relationship than that of mere creaturely dependence. We owe to God both duty as Lord, and allegiance as King. So in the same way the second stage leads up to a third and higher, in which we are conscious of something more than service, and we feel our spiritual likeness to God, which we can only describe as sonship. In this last relationship of all, the two lower are only intensified. Man is more dependent as a creature, and more dutiful as a servant, because he is also a son. Indeed, until the filial relationship is entered into and understood, the creaturely is missed, and that of service is lamentably slighted and

lamely performed at best. All religion stands and falls, then, with this fatherly conception of God. Hence it is that the law made nothing perfect, because our spiritual nature, which links with God as the Father of our spirits, was then kept in shadow. Men then stood in awe at the base of Sinai, and entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. Not so with us, who are come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and who, in idea at least, if not in full fruition, have entered into the very holy of holies, where the rapt spirit dwells in calm ecstasy, in the light which is the glory of God as seen in Jesus Christ. In Him there dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and beholding that light, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

On these grounds we regard a full psychology and a full Theology as complementary each to the other. The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, scarcely to be understood as a pure theological truth, is all the more clearly seen when it comes out as the logical sequel of the existence in us of a special organ of God-consciousness. Why, we may ask, was such an organ given at all unless —to reason teleologically—its true function is to hold deep communion with God—a communion deeper than a mere sense of dependence, deeper even than the mere sense of duty? Hence it is that with perfect consistency those whose ideas of life and religion are merely deistic pass this subject by as mystical. They even shrink from such an expression as the Fatherhood of God, unless in a figurative sense, such as that by which God may be said to be the Father of lights or the Father of the dew. But this will not satisfy any truly awakened mind. Filled with the sense of a special relationship with Him, and which the incarnation vouches for, we feel after and find

what that relationship is. It is adoption when described experimentally, but actually it is the reception back of one into the family who was a son, but who was dead and is alive again, who was lost and is found. If the Theology of the future is to have any hold on the consciences of men, it must build on these foundations. It must get rid of makeshift explanations of mere adoption, which do not go to the heart of the question. Modern Theology must be real, and touch each of our deepest moral interests. Hence the true ground of the Fatherhood of God lies in our spirits, of which He is specially the Father, and so psychology and Theology answer to each other, as face answereth to face in water.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

Is it possible, we shall be asked, that the new Theology can have any fresh aspect of truth with regard to the Person of Christ? If there is a subject which may be said to be exhausted in the past, it is this. We only tread on the ashes of extinct fires as we pass down the six centuries during which the Eastern Church attempted to define this mystery of the union of Godhead and manhood in Christ, pursuing the question up to the last point to which inquiry can go. There are three stages of the discussion, all traced out by Dorner, to whose exhaustive study of the controversy, in all its bearings, it is presumption to suppose that we can add anything. The coexistence of two distinct natures in one person, this is the first stage of the discussion, and covers the entire ground up to the Council of Nice. The second stage is the mode of the union, whether the Godhead replaced the manhood, or was subordinated to it during the days of His flesh,—this covers the entire ground of the Eutychian and Nestorian controversy, extending from the fourth to the sixth century. The third and last stage of the discussion was reached when Church doctrine began to lose itself in subtleties, from a vain attempt to define mysteries beyond the grasp of our poor faculties. When we reach the stage of the Monothelite and Duothelite

controversy, we do not need the solemn sneer of Gibbon to be reminded that the Church has lost its way in a morass of muddy metaphysics. In its passion for precision of statement and verbal distinctness, it has let dogma range free, there to lose itself in a region far beyond and above experience, and where we are unable to argue from the analogies of our own nature. "Man, proud man, most ignorant of what he's most assured, his glassy essence," in presuming to define whether there was one will or two wills in the God-man, is wandering in a mighty maze without a plan. Indeed, our definitions of will in human nature are little more than verbal, hence it is better to be silent with regard to the mode of action of the divine will on the human in Christ. Here we should draw rein. Dogmatism has at last silenced itself by impinging on an insoluble mystery, and when the Eastern Church had sunk to this stage of useless refining, it was time for the trumpet to sound, and the sword of the Saracens to cut short such verbal trifling.

Such, in brief, are the three stages which the discussion has passed through. Is Christ human or divine? And if both, what is the nature of the union? And lastly, in this union is there a suspense of the human will through the action of the divine? Each of these stages is an advance in refinement on the preceding. The second logically grows out of the first, and the third out of the second, and to some extent seems a kind of sequel to it: it is a necessity of the human mind in search of some consistent explanation of what is already affirmed. Christ is both human and divine, so far for His nature: but this God-man is not the union of two Persons in one nature, but of one Person in two natures. This is the second stage of the discussion, when Nestorian and Eutychian controversies had exhausted themselves by mutual con-

tradiction. The third stage is only the consummation of the two previous, in which we close up the discussion by affirming that the two natures in one Person are so indissolubly one, that He is no longer God or man; but, to use the Athanasian metaphor, as water and wine when mixed are no longer water or wine, but a *tertium quid* of the two, so it is with Christ. It is unorthodox to say any longer, as the Monothelites or Duothelites did, that this or that act of Christ was done in virtue of His Godhead, this or that in virtue of His manhood. "Though He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ," so the *Quicunque Vult* words it; and with that solution, which is the last word of six centuries of strife, the question may be said to have been set at rest.

We should be the last to wish to disturb a composition which is not a compromise. When rightly understood and cleared from later glosses, the true doctrine of the great Athanasius is all that we should desire to stand by. But it is a question whether the old Theology, in its fear of the error on one side, has not leaned too much to the error on the opposite extreme. Certain teachings, we are told, are "painfully humanitarian." This arguing *ex abundanti cautelâ* on the side of the old orthodoxy has brought with it a certain indistinctness of teaching, if not the actual effacing of the true humanity of our Lord. The Church in too many cases has held this doctrine in word only, but not in deed and in truth. She has shrunk from taking the true meaning out of the plain statement of the evangelist: "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man." She held it to be "painfully humanitarian" to think of Jesus as growing up to the consciousness that He was the Christ by slow degrees and under effort, as other men, and so attaining the consciousness that He had any special

mission in life. But the inspired evangelist evidently was not weighed down with this Saul's armour of dogmatic prepossession, when he described the increase of Jesus as one which was inward as well as outward. To the extreme dogmatist, whose views unconsciously or not are semi-Docetic, the growth of Jesus must be of the body alone. The mere anti-Arian easily drops into the Apollinarian. As a dogma, he allows that Jesus was very man, body, soul, and spirit, and also in His case as ours—

> "That nature crescent doth not grow alone,
> In thews and bulk, but as this temple waxes;
> The inward service of the mind and soul
> Grows wide withal."

But there are unconscious heresies even among the orthodox, and this is one. The old Theology as a rule had lost the sense of the growth of Christ, for it had lost the true meaning of the *Κενώσις* (Phil. ii. 7). This doctrine of the exinanition of the eternal Logos as the correlative of His incarnation in the man-Christ is one of those lost truths which the Church of our day has recovered like buried treasure from the depths of the sea of time. It is the fate of all such truths, when fished up at last, to appear unmeaning at first. They are like the statue of the marine Glaucus of the well-known myth of Plato, they are encrusted with the shells and seaweed of a dead past. It needed the storm and stress of Irving's preaching, and the pathetic fact that he was solemnly deposed as a Scotch presbyter for proclaiming this long-forgotten truth, before the Docetism of the old Theology began to give way. But now the best minds in Scotland, as elsewhere, recognise the *Kenosis* as the true key to the Incarnation. In our day the doctrine of the *Kenosis* only needs to be stated in terms to be accepted. In one sense the controversy of fifty

years ago has died down. No trained theologian any longer pretends to question the exact meaning of the text, that Jesus increased in wisdom as well as in stature and favour or grace; and that as the result of this perfect and harmonious growth there was an increase of wisdom, which is of the soul, of stature, which is of the body, and grace (mistranslated favour), which is of the spirit, and so His whole *tripartite* humanity grew in equal proportions, as the lily and the rose do, root, stalk, and flower all maturing together.

But it is one thing to admit the *Kenosis* as a bare truth of scientific criticism, quite another thing to reconstruct our Theology on this basis. This is the mistake of the men of compromise which we have again and again to complain of. They admit in so many words that the old Theology let slip certain vital and fundamental truths, and then having made this concession as a kind of salve to criticism, they go on repeating the old phrases as if old cloth and new could be patched up together, or as if the new wine would not burst the old and shrunk wine-skin. If the *Kenosis* is the only account of the Incarnation which explains the facts of Christ's life, we must consistently carry it out. It is a great central truth which bears on every other truth of Theology, and compels us to mould our conceptions of the Person of Christ in harmony with this view of His birth as a "sleep and a forgetting." This is the true relation of Christ to us, and the point where the Gospels bring before us the Incarnation of the eternal Word. What the Logos is in Himself, and what relation He held to the everlasting Father before the worlds were, who shall dare to say? The subject is too high for us. Any definition of His pre-existence as against the Arian hypothesis is only excusable on the ground that of the

two theories concerning the pre-existence of Christ, that of Arius, if more plausible than that of Athanasius, is in reality the less reasonable. Nay more, it actually impugned the Fatherhood of God, and reduced us to a dreary Deism; since, if there is no eternal Son begotten before the worlds, how can there be an eternal Father? We do not presume to inquire into the nature of the eternal Son in Himself; but we must ask and know what that Son is, and what He becomes when He touches the plane of human nature. Here the Arian attempt to rationalize a mystery finds its counterpart in the Apollinarian. The one taught that Christ was a little less than God, the other that He was a little less than man. We see in both the Arian and the Apollinarian hypothesis the attempt of a matter-of-fact and rationalistic intellect to smooth down a mystery by taking off some of the edges of the difficulty. If we are to use such a phrase as the generation of the eternal Son, then it must, in a sense, have had a beginning in time. So Arius reasoned. Then came Apollinaris to throw light on and explain the mode of Godhead indwelling in manhood, by teaching that the Logos in Him replaced the human spirit. It was in this sense that Apollinaris, if we assume the pneuma to be an integral part of man, made Him to be a little less than man, as Arius had made Him a little less than God.

To both these errors the *Kenosis* is the true reply. It is said that He emptied Himself *in so far as* He could empty Himself, *i.e.* He laid aside, as good critics have defined and limited the *Kenosis*, the outward glory, the majesty, as we should say, of Godhead, retaining only that which is inherent and intrinsic to our very conception of Godhead. We are here at once face to face with a great mystery, the very kernel of the doctrine of

the Incarnation. But are there, we ask, certain attributes inherent to Godhead and others less so: are some intrinsic and others extrinsic? Apparently so, if we are to set forth the full meaning of the *Kenosis* as taught in that proof passage, Phil. ii. 7. Indeed, but for this element of the *Kenosis*, the Incarnation would be the most unmeaning of phrases, as we suspect it still is to the majority. Unless He laid aside the divine, we do not see how He could have partaken of the human, unless we hold to a Pantheistic confusion of human and divine, as in all Hindu mythologies is the case where the Incarnation is Docetic only. In the case of the historical Christ we are taught that in some way inconceivable to us, and of which we only cover over our ignorance by the phrase *communicatio idiomatum*, the abyss was crossed once for all between Godhead and manhood. *How*, it is not for us to say, whose duty it is reverently to accept the annunciation of the truth as the virgin mother did. Behold the handmaid of the Lord! In her case there was no "How can these things be?" as a kind of challenge of incredulity. In the same way, there should not be in us a disposition to traverse a truth which transcends experience. As we believe in His pre-existent Godhead, so we are bound to believe as distinctly in His perfect humanity.

In the days of His flesh, this expression is the true key to the *Kenosis*. There were the days of His flesh when He was less than He had been, and also less than He was to be and now is. In His humiliation His judgment was taken from Him. When in mockery He was once blindfolded, buffeted, and then bidden to prophesy who it was who smote Him, little did the soldiers suspect how exactly they were falling in with and helping to fulfil the words of Isaiah, "Who is

blind as my messenger, and deaf as my servant?" These things then the soldiers did, and we have little more to do than reverently to try and spell out their meaning. We see that the child Jesus, who was in all points like us, sin only excepted, grew as other children grew. We only add the phrase "sin excepted" for form's sake, since sin, so far from being an integral part of our nature, is a dreadful disease, an unnatural deterioration from our true standard. It is the *vitium* which, like the vine disease in the end, kills the vine unless extirpated.

So far the real difficulty of the problem is as yet not touched. All will allow that He was *perfectus homo;* but when we take divines at their word, and insist on His perfect humanity, they ask us for certain exceptions, such as omniscience, if not omnipotence, which brings us back to the old Docetism. In our present nature there are not only limitations of knowledge, but also of goodness itself. As far as we know of moral perfection in man, it is a plant which only blows under the nipping frosts and bracing breezes of temptation within and of trial without. In a sense, even the old school of divines who overlook the *Kenosis* will admit that the knowledge of Jesus was limited and partial. They see that to a Jewish peasant the philosophies of Greece and India were, from the nature of the case, a sealed book. But what of that? Milton, as we know, ingeniously turns the edge of the difficulty when Satan, in the Fourth Book of *Paradise Regained,* plies the Messiah with the temptation of wisdom. The answer of Christ shows that although Milton had exchanged his old dogmatic Docetism for Arianism, yet still he could not see to the bottom of the question, and left off in much the same perplexity as he seems to have been as to whether the Ptolemæan or the Copernican astronomy was the true one.

> "To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied:
> Think not, but that I know these things: or think
> I know them not, not therefore am I short
> Of knowing what I ought."

It is difficult to gather from the long speech which follows what Milton thought of the subject of Christ's increase in wisdom. An expression in Satan's speech to Him, where he reminds Him that He once sat alone in the temple among the gravest Rabbis, disputant on points and questions, filling Moses' chair, "teaching not taught," seems to suggest the thought of the old Theology. It is Docetic in spirit if not in form. The late Frederick Robertson was one of the first to point out the true meaning of this incident in the life of Christ. That a child of twelve years of age should teach instead of learning, did not strike those who conceived of the child Jesus in infancy, as He is painted by Rubens. He represents an infant prodigy with a halo round His head to mark the contrast between His superior wisdom, which was that of innate Godhead, to that of these doctors of the law, which was only the result of laborious study. The modern conception of "Christ among the doctors" has been painted by Holman Hunt, and any one who has seen and can contrast the two pictures will at once seize the point of the distinction between the old Theology and the new.

The conclusion we come to is the same in the old Theology and the new. But the point of departure is not the same, and a good deal of the soundness of our conclusion depends on the point from which we set out, and the steps by which we reach it. The old method is dogmatic; it assumes on Church authority, and from a few texts dogmatically interpreted, the very point in dispute, and having settled the question of His Person in this way it proceeds to argue from it deductively.

It ascribes certain acts of His most holy life as the outcome of His Godhead, and certain others as the product of His manhood. If the result does not create the impression that we believe in "two persons in one nature" instead of two natures in one person, it is only because orthodoxy is happily inconsistent with itself. The other method, which is that of the new Theology, assumes nothing, and sets out from the base line of His perfect humanity. It sees that, given only His manhood, we are shut in to the conclusion of His Godhead, if we carry the argument fairly out to the end. This the author of *Ecce Homo* has not done, and it is not for us to say why he has long delayed and ultimately shrunk from doing it. Much less do we feel disposed to sew a patch to his garment, as the author of *Ecce Deus* uncritically attempted to do. The late Mr. Young, the author of the *Christ of History*, is the ablest of several writers we could name who has traced the argument from the manhood to the Godhead logically to its legitimate conclusion. The life of Christ is only a confused cry, *a vox clamantis*, like that of His herald the Baptist, unless it rises to full self-consciousness. All superior minds reach this if they live beyond what we may call the "inarticulate wailings of spiritual infancy." There are the Chattertons and Keatses of genius who are "the inheritors of unfulfilled renown far in the unapparent." The phrase is more apt than even Shelley thought it. There are these *Infanti Perdati* whose "throne is a thought and whose world an idea." They dwelt in mist like the storm-wraith, because the idea has not lived long enough to clothe itself in form. Such is genius when it dies untimely, and before it has reached full self-consciousness. Such is the Christ which some of our modern critics go after into the wilderness, and only end in hearing an echo of their own thoughts,

which they confuse with His voice. Such is not the Christ of history, or of the Church's faith. To us the Christ rises from spotless manhood up through Messiahship into a height of glory which His pre-existence can alone explain and justify. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him (ὑπερύψωσεν). The force of the ὑπερ is not temporal, but ethical. It is exaltation beyond all that we can ask or think, unlimited glory, unbounded majesty, and exhaustless grace. If this is not Godhead, then language fails to convey meaning. Such is the true faith of the Church in her Lord.

We reach, then, the same conclusion as the old orthodox believer, but we do so by a safer and more scriptural method. We have the highest conviction that His perfect manhood involves and implies His perfect Godhead, and that all midway theories, Arian and Apollinarian alike, reproduce all the objections of the Docetism which they seem to explain away. Our conviction of His Godhead is thus seen. It is based on the law that the opposite of it would imply self-contradiction. We must insist on the man Christ Jesus growing up to full self-consciousness. The period over which such growth extended seems intentionally marked by the Gospels. This consciousness dawned at twelve years of age; it was mature when He reached thirty years of age, and then, as we are significantly told, He was led up of the Spirit to be tried or tested of the devil. This is the Alpha and Omega of His spiritual growth. After that He had reached the time of action, and no longer needed testing. We must face, then, the alternative which Renan shrinks from, but ultimately is forced to, that with full self-consciousness He was either the Messiah or a deceiver. There is really no middle term. The Jews take one horn of the dilemma and Christians the other, and between the two, negative critics miserably oscillate as men who dare not take

sides. They are like those Pharisees who could not or would not say whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men. Such are the unworthy shifts of the critics who begin with the humanity, and when self-consciousness is reached do not know what to say of the Messiah. It is at the Temptation that the two roads fork off, and the mere humanitarian and the believer in the God-man part company. Up to this point humanitarianism is not painful, because it is not forced and untrue to facts. But after that point we rise to a growing conviction that either Jesus is a false Messiah, or something more than a mere Messiah. Thus we see that the true conception of Messiahship carries with it the thought of Immanuel (God with us).

This is the representation of the Person of Christ which the new Theology should teach, and which gains ground on every side. It is not enough to recognise His humanity in phrase, and then pass it by, as divines of the old school are in the habit of doing, since a divine truth is always more than a mere truism. It implies at least a change of front—a new mode of conceiving a blessed mystery. That manhood could grow up into Godhead through self-consciousness must imply pre-existence on His part, else the abyss between manhood and Godhead was spanned by what we should describe as an act of assumption, the *ἁρπαγμόν*, the *robbery* of the E. V. Hence, of all hypotheses the Arian is the most plausible but the most irrational, and would have been better left to be met and overcome by calm argument than by Conciliar authority under the patronage of a Byzantine Cæsar. We cannot fail to recognise in the self-consciousness of Christ an admission on His part that He came from God and went to God. How and by what stages the Christ reached this conviction, which was

either true, as we hold it to be, or rank blasphemy, as the Jew held it, it is idle to ask. The fact itself, and not the how or the when, is all that we care to insist on.

But this growing self-consciousness, which is the key to His Messianic character, also opens the wards of all the locked secrets of His life. In this way we account for the apparent absence of initiative or self-will in a character so strong as His. His dependence on His Father's will throughout His ministry is the secret of His miraculous power. The old divines were in the habit of referring His power of working miracles to the inherent might of indwelling Godhead. In this respect they contrast Christ's miracles with those of Moses, Elijah, and others. But this contrast arose from an ill-regulated reverence, which fails to explain the true dignity of Christ as all taught Christians will now admit. There is a sense, and that the deepest of all, in which Christ as the eternal Son of the Father was not less dependent, but even more so, than any mere servant or messenger could be, for special illumination at each moment. He waited, as they did, for the signal from His Father when to work a miracle and when to forbear. The evangelist is careful to record His prayer for direction on the eve of His greatest miracle, the raising of Lazarus. This thought has such wide bearings, that space only forbids our tracing it farther out. But the conclusion which we take our stand on is this, that in the Person of our Lord Jesus the Godhead grew out of the manhood through the intermediate stage of His Messiahship. His self-consciousness, in a word, rose by these three stages of manhood through Messiahship up to that of full union with the Father.

In this way, and in this only, is the true meaning of the *Kenosis* brought to light. Incarnation is only the

half truth. The *Kenosis* is its full-orbed presentment; whereas the phrase "Incarnation" admits of a Docetic sense or an Arian sense. He may have thrown manhood over Godhead as a kind of temporary veil. Too many are content thus to think of the subject to this day, and that view passes in many circles as orthodox. But so far from this being the adequate conception of the union of two natures in one Person, we may remark as a warning, that this crude external mode of apprehending this truth produces the very error it is supposed to check. That the popular Theology is crudely Tritheistic, we gather from Milton's college exercise, his "Ode on the Nativity." Such Tritheism leads to a reaction, as we see in Milton's case, the first step of which is Arianism, and the last mere Psilanthropism. As the term Incarnation has rooted itself in the language, we have no wish to expel it, much less replace it by so technical a phrase as *Kenosis*. But to those who care more for truth than the popular phrases in which that truth is embodied, it is important to note that the term Incarnation, if retained at all, should be understood in the full sense of the "Word becoming flesh." To reach this we must add the conception of that self-abasement which is implied in the term *Kenosis* or *Erniedrigung*. A poem of Archbishop Trench, taken from an Eastern source, may assist some in getting at the true thought of this *Erniedrigung*—

> "A dewdrop falling on the ocean wave,
> Exclaimed with fear, I perish in the grave;
> But in a shell received this drop of dew,
> Unto a pearl of wondrous lustre grew,
> Until at last it learned to magnify
> The grace that thrust it forth as but to die.
> But now again I perish quite, it said,
> Torn by rude diver from its ocean bed:
> Oh, unbelieving! so it came to gleam
> Rich jewel in a monarch's diadem."

This imagery of the dewdrop falling on the ocean wave, and yet not lost there, though fanciful, illustrates the first stage, which we may describe as the exinanition of the eternal Logos lost in the shell of humanity. The next stage of the wondrous mystery is that this manifestation of the Word by self-effacement having begun in this way, should go on until the dewdrop grew into a pearl of wondrous lustre. The last and crowning stage of the mystery is that from this new home in its ocean-bed it should pass through the sharp agony of the cross and grave into final glory, and gleam as the richest jewel in the crown of Him who is seen wearing many crowns.

The sober truth is that when we approach this miracle of miracles, the bush burning but not consumed, Godhead indwelling in humanity, we must loose the shoes from off our feet. It is holy ground, and all our usual phrases, such as Incarnation, are not only inadequate, but when pressed too far, actually misleading. The phrase of the *Quicunque Vult* is in this way only negatively true; it opposes an error, but it fails to affirm the counter truth, "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh," so far so well, "but by taking of the manhood into God;" this is unmeaning, or at least it fails to emphasize the exinanition.

The truth is that the exinanition is a mystery of love which is too deep to be sounded by any plummet of the mere intellect. As long as we stand and speculate we are met with one logical contradiction after another. Even the philosophical Deist fails to conceive, as Kant admits, in what the Personality of God consists, since personality implies limitation, and how can we limit the Absolute? Much more is this the case when we begin to think of the Logos becoming flesh (σὰρξ ἐγένετο). The

phrase is a verbal contradiction; it is beyond us and past finding out. The old school of Theology, Greeks, Latins, and moderns, all have erred in this respect. They have confidently let down their shallow plummet of dogma, and the only answer has been, "the depth saith, It is not in me." In the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, and the Church has been repeating this mistake of the world. There were rationalizing minds even among the early believers; and then the orthodox went out to fight the enemy with his own weapon, and with what sorry result patristic Theology is one melancholy comment. The men who led the Reformation were no wiser; they repeated the mistake of meeting error with dogma. The second age of scholasticism has been as barren of result as the first; and in the end, the true doctrine of the Person of Christ has to be restated, although, as we have seen, six centuries of controversy had brought to view every conceivable phase of error on the subject of the union of human and divine in the Person of Christ.

The conclusion, then, we come to is that the new Theology must go to another school than that of the dialectical and dogmatic temper to get the true conception of the *Kenosis*. It is Pascal who observes that the heart has its logic as well as the head. Intuitional Theology, as we describe the Theology of the future, will find a *rationale* of this mystery, but it is revealed unto babes. By babes we understand those who follow their spiritual intuitions, and who cry out as lost children to their heavenly Father for light and direction. "An infant crying in the night—an infant crying for the light"—this is the spiritual account of man which one of our own poets has given. This is our base line, our point of departure. That one who is not ashamed

to call us brethren, and whom we may call our "elder brother," should out of absolute love and exhaustless pity be found in fashion as a man, this is an act of self-abasement unique of its kind and God-like. It is an act which, for that very reason, if conceivable at all, is conceivable only as proceeding from the fountain of all goodness. It has been truly observed that such extreme self-abnegation is out of character with a creature nature altogether. To suppose of the highest archangel that he could under some resistless internal impulse of self-sacrifice offer to descend the scale of being so low as to be found in fashion as a man, is to assume a dignity altogether beyond a creaturely nature. Angels could at best look on and pity a fallen race like ours. To step down to our low estate would imply powers of self-abnegation which, out of its very surrender would give rise to a contradiction. There are types of goodness, and some of the mediæval saints bordered on it, in which mortification of self passes extravagance, and so falls into the pride which apes humility. So we should think of an angelic nature were we told of such a self-abasement. In the case of a Being who is said to be one with God, and who was God, this is conceivable, because He is the Highest. But in the case of any one who was below the greatest to become less than the least, carries with it too violent a contradiction. We may say of this with the psalmist, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for them."

We can look at the humiliation of the eternal Son of God, then, in only one light. He is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. He is either the Only-begotten in the bosom of the Father, or else (for all Arian hypotheses are too irrational to be even argued with) on

the humanitarian hypothesis we must see that the man Jesus of Nazareth attained a height of God-consciousness absolutely destructive to His true sense of creaturely dependence. As in the legendary after-growths of Sankya Muni's story we read how he became Gaudama and Buddha even before his death, and that death finally released him from the wheel of life, and translated him into that world of Nirwana, where, as in Hegel's philosophy, Being and non-Being reach the point of identity. It is in no such light that we read the Gospel narrative. At every moment of the wondrous story of Christ we meet Him at a stage of God-consciousness of which dependence on His Father's will was the one prominent element. Not my will but Thine be done, is more than a single cry wrung from Him under the agony in the garden. It is the keynote to His whole career; His inner existence was set to this thought from the first dawn of self-consciousness.

A psychological study of the life of Christ is desirable, but none has attempted it, and perhaps it is better not attempted, for we are confronted with an initial difficulty never to be overcome. We can understand a pure and sinless nature rising from one height of God-consciousness to another, until at last all sense of separate creature-life is lost in the blaze of God's glory. In this sense, as the apostle says of himself, "the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." But then this God-consciousness can never exclude self-consciousness. He must always feel his creaturely dependence, and at the very height of spiritual rapture his sense of dependence will only deepen, and he will say as this same apostle exclaims, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." In Christ there is this

perplexing element, that self-consciousness is not merely sunk and subordinated as it is bound to be, but in a sense it may be said to have disappeared altogether. He is so lost in His sense of oneness of purpose with God, that He says, "I and my Father are one." That this sounded blasphemous to the ears of those who heard it we can easily understand, even if the narrative was not careful to say that it was so understood as making Himself equal with God. How are we to account for this on any other supposition but the one of His pre-existence? Still, it was a pre-existence, as we are endeavouring to point out, in which some solution of continuity was made by the *Kenosis*. If He had entered on His earthly existence under a full sense of God-consciousness, as the old Theology implies, and that expression of the *Te Deum* certainly suggests, "When Thou didst undertake to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb;" then we do not see how the human will could have been called out at all as it was. Then the prayer is unmeaning, "Not my will, but Thine be done." On the other hand, if He began with self-consciousness only, and slowly grew up as others do to God-consciousness by acts of prayer and faith, there would have been a limit beyond which His self-consciousness never could have risen into God-consciousness. In Christ, on the other hand, there is the singular and unique phenomenon of a *Kenosis*, or the quenching of a full God-consciousness, only to grow up under self-consciousness into a sense of His pre-existent glory. The whole psychology of Christ is touched on by St. John in a metaphor which, for felicity of phrase and distinctness of touch, leaves nothing to be desired.

At the supper, when He washed His disciples' feet, it is said that "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all

things into His hand, and that He was come from God and went to God: He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself." In this symbolic action we have the three stages of the *Kenosis* as marked out by the Apostle Paul. (1) He riseth from supper, which is the equivalent to being in the form of God and equal with God; (2) He laid aside His garments, which is equivalent to, He made Himself of no reputation, the true central thought of the *Kenosis;* (3) He took a towel and girded Himself, which in the language of St. Paul is, He took upon Him the form of a servant. He not only took, but also girded Himself with the towel of the slave, who waits at the door to wash the feet of the evening guest. To say that all this was done to teach us an example of humility, is to read only the surface of Scripture, as too many do. It had a dogmatic purpose in the record of St. John the Divine, who is the theologian *par excellence.* It is there introduced to teach us the true meaning of His self-abnegation, which was so extreme that we fail to go down into its depths until we discern the sublime thought, that in His case Godhead lost itself in manhood, as the dewdrop in the poem referred to is lost in the shell into which it falls. It was lost—this is the *Kenosis*—in order to find itself again. In this sense none as He ever could realize the thought, "He that loseth his life shall find it." Birth in His case, as it certainly is not in ours, was a "sleep and a forgetting." When He awoke to self-consciousness, as we find He did at twelve years of age, He was feeling after, as genius always does, with a blind instinct His true Fatherhood. "He must be about His Father's business," and is surprised that others could not see it in the same distinct light in which He did.

We do not know where to point to a divine of the old school who has realized this conception of the *Kenosis;* if we could do so, we should not ask for a reconsideration of the whole question of the Person of Christ. The humiliation of His servant form is only half the mystery, the other and more essential element is that in not abhorring the virgin's womb, He entered on a stage of being in which He had to climb to the height of God-consciousness from the low level of the unconscious babe. The new Philosophy of the Unconscious has tried with indifferent success to point out how and by what stages the unconscious passes into the conscious stage in men. It is an application of evolution to psychology. But we are no wiser when we leave off with these theories than when we begin. They merely describe in a new set of phrases borrowed from physiology what every psychologist knew already, that all our early acts are automatic and pre-conscious, and that instinct grows up into reason as night passes into day through dawn. How the night dies and the day is born we know not; the precise moment of dawn is not so easy to fix. So it is with the passing of pre-consciousness into full consciousness.

All this was passed through in the Person of Christ. If the *Kenosis* means all that we imply by *Erniedrigung,* then He lay a babe in the manger as other babes would lie, and the swaddling-clothes of which, not unintentionally, we are told symbolized the same swathing of the spirit—

> "Thou who didst wrap the cloud
> Of infancy around us, that alone
> Thyself with our simplicity awhile
> Shouldst hold communion."

This may be too much to say of others, but not of Him in whose case there was a kind of death of self-

abnegation preceding His birth — a death, as we may describe it, burying with it all previous consciousness, and leaving room only for the building up of it again; as Socrates held that we got our knowledge by reminiscence. What He spake of the temple of His body, that when destroyed He would raise it again in three days, we may say the same of His pre-existent glory. It was surrendered when He came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him; and so entirely was it surrendered, that He had to grow up into self-consciousness under all the limitations of a Jewish peasant. The devout mind willingly turns from the question as to how far He was ignorant of all that lay outside the narrow circle of His home as the carpenter's son. We think of the "dyer's hand" that Shakespeare refers to in his sonnet, and shrink from asking, Did His life so get a "brand from what it worked in"? Milton, as we have seen, only throws out a cloud of phrases to escape a decision on the subject of the limitations of human ignorance and even error in Christ, in so far as a sinless nature can err through ignorance of facts. The expression of the prophet is, as we have seen, the true key, "Who is blind as my servant, and deaf as my messenger?" A cloud lay over the Redeemer in the days of His flesh, not only that through this limitation He might be laid open to temptation, but also that He might ever exhibit the true lesson of life, that man is great neither from what he knows, or has, or does, but only from his perfect, unfaltering affiance in his Father's will.

If this is the true conception of the *Kenosis*, with its three stages of unconsciousness, self-consciousness, and God-consciousness, then He is the perfect and the pattern man, and all errors, Arian and Apollinarian, are alike avoided. In this the old Theology has much to learn

from the new, and if we candidly admit this, we see where our orthodoxy has misled us. In the reaction against humanitarian error we have fallen into the error in the opposite extreme. This is the too common mistake of dogmatism; it is the price that we pay for our controversies. On the whole, it was better that the Church should have sided with Augustine against Pelagius, and equally with Athanasius against Arius. But the price of victory was a certain distortion of truth. It came out of the conflict wounded, as it were, in the house of its friends; and this is our excuse for what otherwise would seem a presumptuous attempt to recast the old Theology in forms of thought which the modern mind can accept. The intuitional Theology is after all only the old experimental Theology of our fathers, but it is stated in terms which are those of modern psychology. If the good old experimental divines of the Wesleyan and Evangelical revival of last century had not been chained down by the conceptions of a mechanical philosophy, they would have seen as we do, that man as made in the image of God contains in him the germ of God-consciousness, and with it the means for attaining to right conceptions of God's fatherly character, and also of the true Person of Christ. But they were afraid to go as far as this. Their phrase "experimental" was limited to the particular experience of those who had passed through the Pauline stage of conviction and conversion. They did not go on to take an intuitional view of Theology, and probably would have considered it presumption to do so. In our age psychology is regarded as the handmaid, not the rival of Theology; and as our survey of human nature teaches us the true Fatherhood of God, so it leads us on, as we have seen, to right conceptions of the Person of Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW AGNOSTICISM.

It is Agnosticism, not Atheism, which the Theology of the future will have to face. This is the last enemy which the Church will have to combat and overcome, and the reason for this change of front is obvious. When Deism or Theism was everywhere dominant, and men only disputed, as Lessing's Nathan did, as to which of the three rings was the true one, or whether all alike were not varieties of the same truth, it is obvious that Atheism was the last and only form of negation. It was enough to question the dominant Deism or any of its inferences for a divine to lampoon his opponent as an Atheist. This should teach us caution and charity in judging those who have been branded in Church history with this hateful epithet. We have come to see that the Atheists of one age were often only the Iconoclasts of another. In denying the Being of God they were only trying to break some grim and immoral idol which was worshipped as God. But Agnosticism goes a stage farther than Atheism. It does not stop at the mere stage of Iconoclasm. It takes the *à priori* road by denying the subjective elements of religion in human nature, or explains them away as Herbert Spencer and his school do on the ghost theory, as mere survivals of fetishism. In this way it strikes at the foundation of

all worship by denying the genuineness of those spiritual instincts on which religion grows as a plant out of the soil. Hence it is that of the two forms of negation this is infinitely the more subtle and deadly. We have also to add, that if the old Theology opposed Atheism, by arguments from design in the world about and around us, the new Theology will have to encounter Agnosticism in the field of human nature, and by an appeal to some divine element the *divinæ particularis aura* innate in every man.

This change of front from the bolder negations of Atheism to the well-bred air of philosophic nescience which the Agnostic assumes is regarded by some with complacency, almost with satisfaction. It is an index, they say, of the more reverent and cautious temper of our age. Men are not prepared to deny roundly where they cannot prove dogmatically. There is a disposition to suspend our judgment, and to place oneself, as the true sceptic professes to do, on the tongue of the balance, and to wait till the scales begin to incline of themselves. All this is a plausible excuse as far as it goes. The intolerant temper of the orthodox party in past times certainly tended to draw out a counter spirit of fierce negation. Men, hunted down like wolves, turned like wolves on their tormentors. The dogmatism of belief was met by the dogmatism of unbelief. The Agnostic, on the other hand, may be regarded as the outcome of an age like ours. He is of the times we live in. In the same way as the earth is cooling down in view of some new glacial epoch, so the theological fires of the past have burned down, and left us cool and unconcerned about all spiritual problems, not excepting even the question of the existence of a personal God, and of our own survival after the second sleep of death.

There is much that is plausible in this indulgent temper of our age, and which is described as the *Zeit-Geist.* It is this tolerance of indifference which explains the change of front we refer to. A tolerant age is always in danger of passing into an age of indifference. But we shall be greatly mistaken if we set down this change of front from active Atheism to passive Agnosticism as entirely owing to the temper of the times, and to the spread of that "wise indifference of the wise" which passes for toleration in our times. There are other causes at work to explain the spread of Agnosticism, and it is to this that we now address ourselves.

It is often said that of the two evils or errors, Atheism and Agnosticism, Agnosticism is the less. It is said in its excuse that it is only a state of suspense; and this cannot be so dangerous as to commit ourselves to a direct negation. But is this so? We should say that the very reverse is the case. The man who says there is no God, is generally reduced to say it in his heart; for, if he utters the daring assertion aloud, the common conscience of mankind will cry out against him for trying to outrage the common instincts of mankind. In his case the "stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Every fane of prayer, every priest, and every altar, in lands savage and civilised, in times remote or recent, will rise up in witness against this wild attempt to controvert the universal experience of all ages of mankind and all stages of culture. Atheism, moreover, when brought to the test in its most offensive form, is often nothing more than a passionate protest against some false form of Theism, which, like all passion, exhausts itself in mere negation. The popular Theism professed by the majority is often hard and unspiritual, and consequently awakes

no response in those who say, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." It is in many cases a stone given for bread; and when human nature declines to call this food, we should be careful not to describe this protest as worse than it is. Such was the Atheism of Shelley, when, as a raw undergraduate, he took this boyish way of emphasizing his dislike to the God of the Optimist and the Anti-Jacobin, which was all that he had learned under the regulative ideas of religion then current at Oxford. The Atheism which is mere anti-Theism, is better met by extracting out of our popular Theism such elements as are unspiritual, and which are dishonouring to the Being whom we approach as the Father of our spirits. When God is represented as He really is, gracious and good, we shall be surprised if much of our popular Atheism, and which is little more than the revolt of such as rankles in the bosom of some artisans, such as the shoemakers of Northampton, will not diminish, if not actually disappear.

It is otherwise with Agnosticism. The evil here lies deeper, and is more insidious, precisely because it is not so blatant. It does not shock ears polite, as open Atheism is supposed to do; but its roots go down into the very subsoil of our nature, and there dry up our springs of action precisely at the point where the religious instincts may be said to take their rise. The Atheist may say, "I know of no God;" he may protest, like Pharaoh, "Who is Jehovah, that I should serve Him?" But the Agnostic goes farther; he adds that God is not only unknown, but unknowable. The former denies the bare fact, but the latter strikes at the very foundations on which that fact is supposed to rest. For this reason we are led to regard Agnosticism, rather than Atheism, as the last enemy which the Christian

Church will have to overcome, and with new weapons. In our day we have witnessed the rise of a school of anti-spiritual philosophy, which, denying the very conception of causation, makes short work, of course, of a supreme cause. It is this sensualist psychology which, if not met on its own ground and answered there by a fresh analysis of human nature, and the recognition of our spiritual instincts or intuitions of primary truth, we may as well give up the whole question as to the truth or falsehood of any Theology; psychology is thus the real battle-ground of the Theology of the future. Hence we are compelled to face the question in our day which teachers of religion too generally set out with assuming instead of proving. Is there any original instinct in man,—a faith-faculty as we should call it in the language of the old Scotch psychology, now out of date,—and which, from its ineradicable presence in all men, proves that man is intended to worship and adore some *numen*, to name him when known, and to feel after and find him if unknown? The question of worship is, whether it has its roots in our nature or is an entirely factitious product, a presumptuous attempt of primitive man, ignorant of his own powers, to overleap the bounds of space and time, and to explain phenomena by a chain of causes outside the phenomena themselves?

The only answer, then, to Agnosticism lies in the appeal to human nature. If there are spiritual instincts in man, so deep-seated and so unappeasable that nothing but God, the living God, can supply them with that which they crave for, then we have proved our point. On the other hand, if all these high instincts are mere morbid fancies, and nothing more than the brooding of unhealthy minds on their own indoor thoughts, we shall then have nothing to reply to those who urge us to throw

our study windows open, and to let in the daylight of common sense on the dormitories of the soul, where a sick conscience crouches away, like an incurable invalid in his cubicle. The appeal, in a word, lies to our spiritual intuitions. If they are genuine and ineradicable, then we may leave Agnostics to themselves. The argument which they can best understand is that the facts are against them. It is they who are diseased, and not we. On the other hand, if they are correct in drawing such a Chinese draft of human nature, with no perspective and no shadows from the Invisible and Infinite, then we may say, as the Israelites to the Philistines, that if their champion can overcome ours, "then we shall be your servants and serve you." On these lines the lists are drawn, and with this issue we are prepared to leave the duel between Theism in all forms, and Atheism in its last and most deadly form of Agnosticism.

Before entering on a survey of our spiritual instincts as evidence for a revelation, let us add only one preliminary remark. It is this, we do not pretend that these instincts, singly or combined, could prove either the Being of a God or His character and purpose to us. That would be to go too far. No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. But we do say that these instincts are as the young unfledged nestlings, which open wide mouths, and flap their as yet downy wings, in token, not that they are able at present, but that they are destined at no distant time, to become denizens of a wider home, and to breathe ampler air than that of the nest in which they at present only chirp and peep. It is this prophecy of immortality in our embryo powers on which Chalmers has enlarged in his *Bridgewater Treatise,* and which an American poet has described as

the meeting point between a stimulus acting on us from without, and the stirring of the instinct from within:—

> "As blind nestlings unafraid,
> That ope wide mouths at every shade,
> With which their downy dream is stirred,
> Taking it for the parent bird.
> So when God's Spirit, which is light,
> My sleeping senses comes across,
> Silent as footprints over moss,
> In my heart's nest those helpless things
> Stir, with a feeble sense of wings,
> Lift themselves up and tremble long
> With premonitions loud of song."

This is a just and fair account of the case. It leads us on to inquire what these instincts are, and what they foreshadow of our future, but it does not go to the length of the Transcendental School of New England, who resolve all religion into a form of intuition, and so sublimate all faith, as Schleiermacher did, into a dim sense of dependence of the finite on the infinite. Our spiritual instincts do not constitute religion, but they make religion possible by laying a basis for it in our nature. These are the needs to which a revelation from God is the adequate and only reply. Thus the best argument for the truth of revelation lies in the sense of correspondence. The adaptation of the gospel to the felt needs of our nature, this has always been a favourite line of evidence; we sometimes call it the internal as opposed to the external. But in reality, instead of being one of two distinct chains of proof, it is the support of the historical itself. It is the one constant and unchanging proof on which the whole Christian Church rests in the past as much as the present. Unless the gospel has met all the needs of all the many minds of many men in all ages, how can it be worthy of all acceptation? We lay stress on the universality of this adaptation to all the

needs of all men, since some men's needs are of one character and others of another; but in every case the question to be first considered is, whether they are genuine needs at all, or only the diseased cravings of a few, and the passing fancies of a particular age. Unless we can use the *quod semper quod ubique quod ab omnibus* kind of test, no adequate evidence is forthcoming for the truth of the gospel. On the contrary, the fact that the gospel was accepted only by some, and in special and exceptional cases, would be damaging to it rather than otherwise. We have to analyse these spiritual needs, and to determine which are truly and genuinely spiritual, before we can see any fitness in the acceptance by mankind of a revelation from God.

Turning, then, to our subject, we may name at once three instincts in man which are deep and inalienable, and without which no revelation would be possible, but which, when they are once stirred, lead man to feel after God and find Him. These three are—(1) the sense of dependence; (2) the craving for righteousness, including in that the deliverance from personal and indwelling sin; and (3) the sense of beauty and the longing for an ideal of which art is at present our only and imperfect expression. These three instincts taken together, and allowing that some natures feel the first most deeply, some the second, and others the third, while few or any equally feel all three, give us the groundwork on which we may raise up the superstructure of a spiritual religion.

1. The earliest and the most ineradicable is the sense of dependence. The apostle glances at this thought in a passage which our version fails to render the force of. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father from whom all that we can call family relationship (*πᾶσα πατριά*), whether in heaven or earth, is named (Eph.

iii. 16). The thought is this, that all fatherhood, all sense of dependence of one man on another, all, in a word, which we can describe as the family, and without which society itself would go to pieces, has its source in God's fatherhood. He is the fountain of all fatherly relationships, and of the family tie in general; and as He setteth the solitary in families on earth, so out of this family relationship there springs the sense of our relationship to One who is the fountain-head of this sense of dependence. This is the true source of all religion; were this dried up or wanting, men would become the God-defying Titans of science, which some timid souls seem to fear that the age is fast drifting towards. Such the age would certainly become, if we had knowledge without wisdom, a science-faculty with no faith-faculty to teach it humility. But happily man cannot cut himself loose from his instincts as easily as some suppose. Supplication is nature's symbol everywhere; we lift up our hands in intercession as we lift up our eyes in thought to One who dwells above, and whose eyes behold and His eyelids try the children of men. Modern science dashes itself in vain against these instincts of the soul. They are too strong for it. Even the hardest Positivist once knelt on his mother's lap while his little hands were folded in prayer. True—alas that it should be so!—there are mothers who have been false to this true vocation of womanhood. It is because the tendency of the age is to unsex woman by prating more about her rights, educational and political, than her privilege and duty as the model of true wifehood and motherhood, that mothers fail to foster the spark of infant piety. They commit infanticide in its worst form when they quench the smoking flax of this instinct of dependence with which we all come into the world, and

which rises by easy gradations from reverence to the lower to reverence for the higher parent, from the fathers of our flesh to the Father of our spirits. Such is this instinct, and so deeply engraven is it in the mind of man, that it lies at the root of all religions. The nature-worships of the old heathen world reflect it quite as much as the covenant religions of the Old and New Testament. The Great Supreme is the Father of gods and men; and much as the poets have done to debase this conception by their coarse amours and crude anthropomorphisms, they have not succeeded in banishing even from philosophy the conception of some relationship between God and man which we may speak of as congenital. This was the verse of Cleanthes—we are also his offspring—which the apostle seized on as the only plank amid the general wreck of the old-world religion on which as on boards and broken pieces of the ship men could all come safe to land. This sense of filial dependence, leading up to a full consciousness of God's Fatherhood, dies down, we must admit in too many cases, either into slavish superstition, or still worse, dull indifference. But this is not the reproach of the spiritual instinct itself, but of those who do not use it as all our instincts are intended to be used. An instinct is not to be set up as against intelligence, as some do, but as that which starts intelligence on the right track, leaving intelligence then to work the question out for itself. If men do not rise on nature's altar-stairs from the earthly to the heavenly Fatherhood, it must be from causes lying outside the nature of man, and which, in the language of Theology, we should describe as the Fall. But it is only fair to add that our original nature is not to be held responsible for this defect or failure; so, whether men respond to it or not, we may appeal to the sense of filial dependence in all men; since God's image

and superscription is stamped on the piece of money which we may describe human nature to be.

2. Next to the sense of dependence on a great Father of all, there is another instinct in our nature quite as ineradicable, and which also leads us to a revelation of God in Christ. This is the conviction of righteousness. Our nature craves for rightness in all its forms, either of justice as between man and man, of holiness as between man and God, or of purity as between man and himself. In all these three directions, as regards God, ourselves, and others, there enters a disturbing sense of shortcoming, for which we have no better name than sin. It is this, whether we call it positive or merely privative, which enters in and disturbs all these three relations. As between man and man, sin enters in and makes us unjust, as between man and God it makes us unholy, as between man and himself it makes us impure. It thus defiles the conscience in all directions, and leads the best and the most saintly natures to cry out, because they are the best and the most saintly, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It is not the coarse and the sensual, but those who are the most opposed to self-indulgence in all forms, who groan the deepest under the bondage of indwelling sin. We are brought then to this strange paradox of our nature, that the best are those who feel themselves to be worst. It is the purest and most abstemious of men who have the deepest sense of evil. The ideal and the actual in their case fall the widest apart, and they see the chasm between what they are and what they ought to be. The superficial and the self-righteous, those who are "content to dwell in decencies for ever," cannot get to the point at which the actual falls short of the ideal. They are like dwellers in a plain country, to whom mountains, with their peaks and passes,

their ice domes, and their glaciers whose crevasses have to be crossed with our life in our hand, are the mere romance of travel. The saintliness which would scale these sacred heights, and stand alone on the mount with God, seems as idle as the wish to fly.

To such it is of no use to appeal to the threefold conviction summed up in the three terms, sin, righteousness, and judgment. But it is none the less true that there is this instinct in our nature, this deep and ineradicable craving after peace and purity. We wish to lay the tumults within, and to rise to the height of calm self-consistency: culture and philosophy offer themselves as teachers of this secret of self-respect; but after trying them we are constrained to say of them, as the depth saith of wisdom, "it is not in me." It is only in God, as He has revealed Himself in Christ as the Reconciler and the Healer of the disease of our nature, that we obtain this inward peace, and know that we have the satisfaction to this hunger and thirst after righteousness. How Christ, who is the Bread of Life, supplies our need and feeds the soul, we need not here describe. It is enough for our present purpose to point out the strength of the instinct, and its felt presence, in every man in a more or less active state, in proportion as he has begun to develop his nature, and to rise above the mere animal.

3. The third instinct which we turn to as witnessing for man being made for God, is the sense of beauty or ideal perfection. It is this which lies at the root of all Art effort. It is the one spiritual element without which Art would deserve all the reproach that has been heaped on it, as tending to debase and sensualize human nature. We stand here at the meeting of two ways, and according as we turn upward or downward will Art rise to be the

handmaid of religion, or sink to be at first its rival and afterwards its implacable enemy. It is because, too often, Art has misunderstood its true vocation, and has lent itself to the harlotry of sense, that it has been denounced in such severe terms as the parent of all idolatry. There has been much excuse for the iconoclastic temper which breaks out at every fresh revival of religious zeal, and which explains the Puritanism, as we may call it, of Moses, of Mohammed, of Savonarola, and of our own Cromwellian Ironsides. The cry has always been the same, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free."

But this need not be so, and ought not to be so. The day is coming when this strife of ages between the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty shall cease. Art shall take her true place as the second, not the first, the handmaid, not the mistress, and so this long rivalry shall end in a happy concord and community of aim. For the present, however, the sense of beauty, or the ideal in form, must work itself out as a blind instinct. It cannot tell who implanted it, and for what object. Few of those who are born artists, and whose genius the world has long since acknowledged as supreme, know their true mission as Art evangelists, and that they are unconscious prophets and messengers sent before the face of the Christ that is to be. In most cases they work "as some wild poet works, without a conscience or an aim." In some few cases, as of the greatest artist of all, of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, there is a sense of their true vocation. Some, as Mendelssohn, feel they have an Art-conscience in music, which to sin against would be to sin against light. But these are the exceptions. Milton was an artist of this type, but the world has many Drydens for one Milton,

many Rubens for one Raffaele. Seldom has Art risen to her true vocation. Even ecclesiastical Art, more often than not, has failed to express the spiritual idea she was intended to embody in form. If, as is the case, she has escaped the taint of the fleshy school, it is only to fall under the yoke of the dogmatic and conventional. We have only to go through the galleries of the Vatican to feel the force of this. We are not offended by the nude, but instead, we are presented with designs like those with which the late Pope tried to signalize his unfortunate reign, by decreeing in his early Pontificate the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and in his later years his own official and *ex cathedrâ* Infallibility. It is impossible to glance at these bold attempts of Art to glorify these two dogmas, without feeling how Art has left her true vocation, which is the worship of the ideal in the form of beauty, when she thus hires herself out as the handmaid of dogmatic theology.

It has been said, with justice, that the good, the true, and the beautiful are three distinct modes of God's manifestation in His works. If we put it the other way, we shall be nearer the mark. The good, the true, and the beautiful are the three modes of approach, the three channels through which man rises up from the seen to the unseen, and so reaches at last the sense of one Eternal and uncreated Fount of Being. There are thus three primitive instincts in man, which we may speak of as spiritual, since they are implanted by Him who is the Father of spirits, and are intended to lead us up out of this maze of sense-perception into the pure upper air of spiritual perception. These are the sense of the good or moral rightness, the sense of the true or intellectual harmony, and the sense of the beautiful, of which Art is the channel of expression. These are all original and

ineradicable instincts, and according as one of the three is the master passion of our nature, are we said to have a genius, as the case may be, either for saintship, or science, or Art expression, in one of its three forms of poetry, painting, or sculpture. The term genius is misleading, and may lead to a dangerous delusion, as if we can safely indulge one of these instincts at the expense of the other two. This cannot be, and the shipwreck of genius is only more certain when this is attempted. Critics have said, and their shallow dictum has done much to lower Art, that Art, as such, has nothing to say to ethical considerations. The true artist, we are told, should hold the glass up to nature, with grand indifference whether virtue or vice throws its shadows there, provided only that he faithfully reflects the age as it is. He has nothing to say to things as they ought to be, but only to things as they are. It is when Art, calling itself Realism, but in fact becoming Sensationalism, sets up this canon that she is preparing the way for her own downfall, of which the decay of Italy, when she took up the Renaissance without the Reformation, should be a sufficient warning. In Germany, Luther came first and Lessing second, and the result is that, with many slips and shortcomings, the primacy is with the German, not the Latin type of culture. This alone should settle the question as to the priority in importance of these instincts, the good, the true, and the beautiful. It also should teach us that, like the Graces, they are sisters and inseparable—

> "Facies quibus omnibus una,
> Nec diversa tamen, qualis decet esse sororum."

The three instincts, then, of our nature which postulate a spiritual Fount of Being are the sense of goodness, of truth, and of beauty. In our apperception of

these three distinct aspects of life we get up into a higher region in which they are seen to meet and blend. The harmonies, for instance, between the higher mathematics and music point to this conclusion; and if for the present, Art and worship are not reconciled, but stand aloof from each other in a suspicious and half-defiant attitude, this arises, not from any defect in the instincts themselves, but from the distorted medium into which they pass as the result of sin. Were man sinless, his sense of goodness, of truth, and of beauty would be developed in equal and harmonious progression. This may perhaps be one meaning of the intermediate state to make up for defects of culture in our present imperfect state of being. Our men of genius, whose development has been one-sided here, will find the balance righted hereafter. Art and science, of which music and mathematics are the most prominent types, will then find their true place. They will find that they are the second, not the first. Wisdom, which is to fear Jehovah, and understanding, which is to depart from evil, will then be seen to have the primacy among our spiritual instincts, but it is only a primacy *inter pares*. It is on the harmonious development of all three, and by these three agreeing in one, that we rise to the instinctive sense of a spiritual ruler of the universe, the God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. If our nature were not disturbed and shattered by the ruin of what we call the Fall for want of a better term, we should then rise on these wings of instinct into a world where the good, the true, and the beautiful would be seen to be only refracted beams of one uncompounded light, which is God. Hence we see how Agnosticism is possible, based as it is on a denial of the truth of these instincts. Men who are dimly

conscious at best of the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty, may go on to deny these instincts altogether. They may thus cut away the ground altogether on which a spiritual religion is to spring up. So true is it, that to kill religion we must first deaden down the instincts which nourish and support it. An unspiritual philosophy prepares the way for the negation of all religion. Hence it is that what is called Agnosticism is in the air, and that to encounter it we have to appeal to these instincts, which, however deadened and degraded, do assert their presence in man, and demand some satisfaction, as all instincts do, some bread from heaven, which they "ope wide mouths" of desire to be satisfied with. So true is it, that a poverty-stricken philosophy ends in a dry, rationalistic, and in the end negative Theology, *Eheu paupertina philosophia desinit in paupertinam theologiam.* The true reply then to Agnosticism is, as we have pointed out, to appeal to these spiritual instincts in our nature, and if their cry is only that "of an infant crying in the night—an infant crying for the light, and with no language but a cry," still it is enough for our purpose. It is the proof that we are in search for, that God, if unknown at present, is at least not ultimately unknowable.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELECTION NOT SELECTION.

"EVEN now after eighteen centuries of Christianity we may be involved in some tremendous error, of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed." We set out with this saying of Vinet, because while applicable to other truths of Theology, it is particularly applicable to that misrepresentation of the divine character which grew up around the doctrine of election. If we can mark where the truth passed into an error, we shall succeed in pointing out one of the chief contrasts between the Theology of the past and the future. The old Theology, in a word, was not as careful as it should have been in guarding the character of God. "Of all beings God has been most misunderstood—misrepresented by many who have not wished to do His will, and misunderstood ofttimes in the bosoms of His chosen friends. It is a coarse, and yet too common remark, that the creed of the Churches sets up a demon in the place of God, a being who conforms more nearly to our idea of devil than of a God."[1] This is strong language, and yet Wesley's remark to Toplady, "Exactly so; your God is my devil," points out where the truth of God may diverge into a lie. Nor let us be surprised at this. The grander the subject, the wider the door

[1] *Orthodox Theology of To-Day*, by Newman Smyth, p. 29, Eng. ed.

for the entrance of error. The vaster the orbit, the easier it is for us to miscalculate it. Even a second of time in the observation of some distant star may mean spaces not to be expressed in our arithmetic. Astronomers are on their guard accordingly, and allow for the equation of time, or the slight difference between the moment of visual perception of one eye and another. It would be well if divines were equally on their guard. They would understand that it is no light matter to deal with the character of the "High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy." The aberration of spiritual light as it passes down the telescope of faith has to be allowed for; and as the truth enters the dim and passion-stained chamber of our soul, it becomes still further distorted, till it is difficult to recognise at last the character of God at all.

So it has been with the doctrine of the divine sovereignty. Originally, and as handled by the Apostle Paul, it was a simple and spiritual account of the mode of action of all divine grace in overcoming the resistance of the carnal mind. The inference from it should be, that if God's grace is mighty enough to reach any, it is mighty enough in the end to reach all. But this doctrine of sovereignty was given a twist as it entered the logic-loving intellect of certain divines. God is light; hence, if we begin to refract the beam of white light, we can pass red or violet rays out of either end of the spectrum. God may become to us either a consuming fire, or a God too tender and pitiful even to chasten His children, much less to cast them off. Generally speaking, we may say that one extreme leads to the other. The doctrine of particular redemption and the full salvation of an elect few only, by a rebound easily understood, passed into the doctrine of the All-Father

who needs no blood ransom at all, and whose very pity anticipates our need of pardon. Hence it is that the ultra-Calvinistic Churches, whether in Geneva or New England, are, without exception, the Churches where Unitarianism and Universalism most readily spring up, and the result of the reaction is in both cases the same. It takes the form of a call for a new Theology. The old affirmation and its modern negation of semi-Deism are felt to be equally bald and one-sided. Men feel the need of a God who is to be both loved and feared at once; and they feel themselves to be as much orphans, when told that the All-Father is a God of bland benevolence, as when taught by the old Theology that His redemptive love is limited to those who are the objects of an elective decree in eternity and a personal call in time.

The doctrine of election is by no means the only New Testament truth which has been turned into an error, if not a lie, in the course of ages; but it is perhaps the most striking instance of that perversion which led Mr. Froude in his antithetical way to say, "Christ gave the gospel, and the father of lies gave Theology." The perversion arose in this way. The Pauline doctrine of election grew out of the Old Testament conception of the "remnant." Through Israel as a race the election after the flesh perished and were cast off; there was always a remnant who were preserved, and who were to become the first-fruits of a new harvest. Election in this aspect looks backward as well as forward. In this sense the apostle quotes the prophet, "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." Here the root-idea of election is the *Shearith* or remnant, which in its turn becomes a first-fruit, in the same way as a sack of

the chosen and best ears of last harvest is specially reserved as the seed-plot of next year's harvest. The life of the wheat plant is in that seed-bag, and according as the best is reserved for seed and not consumed for food, so will the staff of life be preserved in the land.

This is the true and Pauline doctrine of election. It is the promise to Abraham, In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The only change in the promise is that it was given at first to the seed after the flesh, and is given now to that seed which is after the spirit. Israel after the flesh drifted away into captivity as the sand of the sea. Was God's promise to Abraham then to fail? Certainly not. God must be true, though every man were a liar. Hence, as Isaiah saw partially and the Apostle Paul more deeply, the promise rested with a "Shearith," an elect remnant—the remnant of one harvest, the elect or first-fruits of another.

Hence the legitimate inference from the Pauline doctrine of election is the very opposite to that which Calvin and his school drew. The promise to Abraham was multitudinist, not particularist; as the stars in the sky and the sand of the sea, so was his seed to be. When the promise failed after the flesh, it was to be fulfilled after the spirit, but certainly not to a less extent or on a more limited scale. God, who always gives as a king largely and liberally, cannot be supposed to cancel His promise, or to give it again under reservations and limitations. He does not act as if it were the same to Him whether to display His love or His wrath, His glory in the salvation of the elect, and His glory in the preterition or reprobation (it comes to the same thing) of the non-elect. This is that strange distortion of Pauline teaching which we usually identify exclusively with Calvinism, but which Lutherans and also Anglicans hold with some reserva-

tions which do not go to the root of the question. The Westminster Confession is thoroughgoing: "By the decree of God for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."[1] This at least is logical. It is presumptuous in the last degree, and twists a generous thought of God's sovereign mercy, boundless as God Himself, into a narrow arithmetical parcelling out of the race into two heaps, a small heap of the saved, and a great heap, a *massa perditionis,* of the damned. But the Church of England article on the subject, which is also substantially the Lutheran doctrine, Art. XIX. of the XXXIV., limps to a lame and impotent conclusion. It asserts and then retracts the doctrine, holds it up and then holds it back. It reminds us of the ordeal of the girl blindfolded who has to pass over the hot ploughshare. She does not burn her foot, but she only singes it. In the same way, this article on election does not put its foot down on a position which, in the Westminster Confession, burns to the bone as a hot iron would do. But it only escapes this at the cost of logical consistency. A doctrine so safeguarded becomes innocuous, but then the question occurs, Was it worth asserting at all? Predestination strictly considered is a truism. It is a mere explicative phrase for God's omniscience and omnipotence. In the Kantian phrase, there are analytical and synthetical judgments. Election is of the former class. It brings us no farther into the deep things of God. It only amounts to the proverb *che sara sara,* adding, of course,

[1] *Vid.* Westminster Confession, chap. iii., of God's Eternal Decree.

the obvious truism that it will be, because God in Christ wills it.

The error of Theology has arisen out of a confusion more than verbal between election and selection. Calvinism teaches that God selects of His sovereign will and pleasure alone to which of two heaps, each spirit of man or angel is to belong. It is all equally for His own glory, whether a Pharaoh or a Moses, a vessel of wrath or a vessel of mercy, is so ordained. This is selection, and this is the popular Theology to this day. Is it strange that men prefer Deism to this, and reject the whole of evangelical Theology, based as it is on a few texts in the Romans uncritically interpreted?

The only remedy lies in going to the fountain-head of the error, *Melius est petere fontem quam rivulos sectari.* When we go up to the fountain-head and draw water from the living well of Pauline Theology, we find a truth which streams out free and full to all. It is not like the tank limited to a few, as in the Augustinian and Calvinist Theology. The doctrine of election runs through the whole Scripture from first to last, but it is invariably stated to be an election to service, and that service with regard to others. Selection is the opposite. It implies preference, an invidious setting aside of one to the advantage of another. Favouritism is a quality unworthy of God; but when we find it combined with harshness, we have then a presentment of the Divine Being who is like Isaac, unjustly indulgent to one son and unjustly indifferent to the other. As if to guard us against this mistake, we are told how terribly the fault of favouritism was visited on the sons of Isaac, and the whole after history of Jacob is one long lesson that divine blessings are not to be wrested by fraud and double dealing. Indeed, we should be careful how we use the term God's sovereignty. One

man's meat may be another man's poison. So it may be if in describing God as our King we pass on to raise the conception of a despot. Sovereignty, so used, is a phrase harsh enough to numb the young faith, as it has often done. That God is our "King of old" is a truth quite as essential to recognise as that of His Fatherhood. But kingship or chieftainship denotes something widely different from sovereignty. The chieftain is the head of a clan, all having kinship with its head, and to whom "spend me and defend me" is the note of loyalty. But a despot, this is not a Hebrew, but rather an Arab conception of God. According to Palgrave (*vid.* his *Journey through Central Arabia*, chap. viii.), "God is one, not only numerically and without plurality of nature or person, but as the only Agent, the only Force through the universe, leaving nothing to any other beings but unconditional passiveness. The sole motor power and energy is God, neither loving nor enjoying. He is thought of as an absolute, lonely despot, dispensing felicity or damnation according to His will, and alike unsympathizing with either fate." This may be the God of Islam, but He is not the God of the New Testament, who is the Father of spirits, and who, as the sun of the universe, is not only the fountain of light, but also the centre to which all must gravitate.

The doctrine of election calls for restatement, not for rejection. The new Theology must take higher ground than the merely negative school, which in avoiding one error falls into the other; out of Calvinism into Deism, is often only a single step. The Unitarian and Universalist theory, which is only a short cut out of the difficulty, seems to us to call in one error to expel another. By election we understand the mighty and energizing grace of God which, when it lays hold of any character, especially one of some marked indi-

viduality, separates them from the mass of mere conformists to the traditional faith of their fathers, and in this way raises them up to saintship and service. This election springs not so much from any hidden grounds, either of foreseen merit, as the Arminian, or of bare sovereignty, as the Calvinist holds. In either case we confound election with selection. But this preference has its root-idea in the point of priority of time, as some nations are civilised before others. In this sense election is in profound harmony with God's government of the world. It is like the sun, as Pitt once said in a speech on slave emancipation, which rises first in the east, but also enlightens the west—

> "Hic ubi primus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis
> Illic sera rubens accendit lumina vesper."

Hence the election of one, so far from implying the rejection of another, points to the very reverse. Newton was elect to write the *Principia*, and Milton the *Paradise Lost;* and instead of any poor preference in this, the world is all the richer for this proof of God's distinguishing grace to a divine astronomer and a divine poet. Hence, when the doctrine is put in this light, instead of raging against it and saying "your God is my devil," men accept the mystery with devout thankfulness. Men see that God's saints and the world's heroes are only different chapters of the same great book of biography, whose beginning and ending alike is of God. No explanation ever was or can be given why the child of a Lincolnshire farmer, who was so puny as a baby that he was put into a quart jug, should grow into the mind that measured the pull of the sun on the earth, and of the earth on the moon, who analysed the properties of light, and rising step by step in the scale of inductive reasoning, at last drew

order out of chaos, and rejecting hypothesis or guesswork, co-ordinated the scattered laws of astronomy. We can only describe this miracle of genius in the phrase of Pope's epigram—

> "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night,
> God said, Let Newton be, and all is light."

In this sense Longfellow's line is even more true than the glittering conceit of Pope—

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost,
> This foolish world hath never lost."

Theologians who cut history into sacred and profane, fail to see that election, so far from being a mystery peculiar to the doctrines of grace, is in reality a philosophical postulate, inseparable from our primary conception of the Being of God. Every thinker who is a Theist at all, must insist on the truth that all things are of God. He must eliminate contingency; he is a necessitarian *ex necessitate rei.* The only fresh light which Theology can throw on this doctrine is by pointing out that as some are elect to eminence in science and art, and in this sense may be spoken of as the elect Newton and the elect Raffaele, others are elect to the still higher privilege of saintship and service here and hereafter. In this sense, while there is election in the case of every birth, there are degrees of dignity; so the apostle who was separated from his mother's womb and called by God's grace, was a chosen vessel, as the text goes on to explain, "to bear my name before kings and Gentiles." In this sense we can see at least one edge of the mystery, as in certain positions of its orbit we can catch a glimpse of the obverse side of the moon. St. Paul's fitness for that mission, as of Jewish birth, of Greek training, and with Roman citizenship, has been often remarked on. This is much to the point, as helping us to see that God's

sovereignty is the outcome of infinite counsel as well as might. It is much more than a mere decree of a despot—*le roi le veut.* It is wisdom and counsel. It is the βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος (Eph. i. 11), a phrase the double meaning of which must not be missed, as the divine decree is that outcome of Deity which is not originant, as the Calvinist holds, but only efficient. The original principle is love, which acts in a βουλή or counsel held within the Deity, as in the phrase, "Let us make man." The result is a sovereign decree, which, as it is the first in our experience, we erroneously describe as the original principle with God. We have, however, to add, that if election looks back to the choice of the agent for his own good, it also looks forward to his fitness to bring good to others. Election, in a word, is never to privilege; this is an immoral, if not unmeaning phrase when applied to the divine government, for God can have no *privilegia* or private laws for a favoured few; election has reference to duty here, not to distinction hereafter; it is for service, and regards others. In this sense the Messiah is truly described as the elect servant of Jehovah, and the Father delights in Him for this very reason. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again." He is the corn that dies, and so brings forth much fruit. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for the many. As Christ is the great pattern then of the elect, so the inference from this truth of election is something much more than the arbitrary act of an absolute will, such as the Westminster divines conceived of God. To them He was like that king of Babylon, "whom he willed he slew, and whom he willed he kept alive." A relative truth was turned into an absolute. Overwhelmed

with the one thought of the hereafter,—with an eternal heaven and hell awaiting all of Adam born,—the divines of the seventeenth century lost their balance, and could only see two outlets for souls—one above and one beneath. "The souls of the righteous being then, *i.e.* after death, made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none."[1] This is plain language, but it certainly goes beyond the solemn reserve of Scripture. As for the mediæval doctrine of hell, it is unknown to the Old Testament, where instead we read of a Sheol or Hades, Job xxxviii. 17; Gen. xxxvii. 35, xlii. 38, et passim. On the other hand, there are hints in the New Testament of an intermediate state which is not obscurely referred to in such passages (1 Pet. iii. 18 and iv. 6),—passages which we need not here exegetically enter upon. Had the Reformers been more distrustful of dogma, they might easily have rejected the grosser errors of purgatory, such as that pain purifies, and that masses for souls carry indulgence for sins committed here; and the result would have been that the Church would have believed in an intermediate state after death. The subject might have been left in shadow, as the Sheol of the Old Testament Scriptures is only hinted at. But, unfortunately for the cause of truth and charity, all the Reformers, we must add, with the honourable exception of Zwingli, were quite as dogmatic as the divines they replaced. They were only too ready to close the gates of mercy on mankind, leaving open certain doors of covenant Theology, of which they were the assumed janitors, after displacing

[1] Westminster Confession, chap. xxiii.

the traditional janitor, St. Peter, from that post of door-keeper. Election thus seen in the lurid light of this heaven and hell Theology, soon assumed quite a strange and forbidding aspect. The divines of the age after the Reformation succeeded only too well in adding a new terror to death, when they extracted from Calvin's *Institutes* a predestinarian view of our eternal state. This was declared to be the marrow of Theology by all the more logical Reformers. But how short-sighted this terrorism was! There may have been other causes for it, but it is remarkable that the Reformation stood still from the moment that an apology, such as the *Institutes* originally was meant to be, was turned into a new code of dogma. Soon the Jesuit reaction recovered all the ground lost in South Europe, and much even in Northern Europe. It would be too much to say that the Jesuits fought Calvinism, and beat it back solely by the aid of the doctrine of purgatory. But it has more to say to the success of the counter-Reformation than many suppose. Between the extreme Left of Deism and the extreme Right of the Roman doctrine of indulgences, the Reformation, a century after Luther, came to a point where two seas met; and the fore part, the dogmatists, stuck fast, while the hinder part, the Deists, was broken by the violence of the waves. This account of St. Paul's shipwreck illustrates to the letter the fate of the fore and hinder part of the body of the Reformers. There were Protestants who went to pieces as Freethinkers, and others who stuck fast on the shoal of dogmatism. But the ship was broken, and hence the need of a new ship in which to launch out, freighted with a new Theology. Hence it is that, in common with almost every other doctrine in the circle of Theology, this truth of election has to be cleared from those incrustations of particularism

and predestinarianism which have thickened around it ever since Calvin's mind, impressed with God's particular call of Himself, laid such exceptional stress upon it. The fact is too often overlooked that Calvin's was a typical intellect of the logic-loving type, which insists on symmetry, and is impatient of a single hazy thought. His was a French intellect of the anvil and hammer type for beating out dogma; and if truth is to be forged, not moulded, then Calvin certainly was the workman to do it. But what a poor piece of work comes from this welding together of predestinarianism—a truth held even by Deists—with the Pauline truth of our election to special service! There is nothing then for us but to break up this welding, and restore these doctrines of natural and revealed religion respectively to their right owners. Predestinarianism is an obvious truth, or even truism of all who are Deists; election is the special Pauline aspect of grace. In Paul's case it is cast and not hammered at all. Election is run hissing-hot out of the tapped furnace of his own exceptional experience of conversion. He discovers that the last and most unlikely of men was selected as the very fittest to proclaim the truth which he had once persecuted. In this sense all spiritual minds implicitly, if not explicitly, agree to hold election in common. In this view of grace, as seizing on us and specializing us for some work at conversion, Wesley is at one with Whitfield, and Arminius with Calvin. Hence it is because our age is trained to see that this is a truth where Theology and philosophy touch, that our differences on this dogma are dead. We may add with thankfulness, that the Arminian and Calvinist controversy has died down very much, since it is seen that there is no more fuel to throw on the flame. The two chief disputants on either side seem to have seized on

a half-truth, and hammered it out as those peasant warriors did when they beat their ploughshares into swords. Their dogmas were at best clumsy weapons, either for attack or defence; and our age, which is above all a practical age, recalls these divines from their cut and thrust polemics to the direct and pressing duty of evangelizing the masses. To the true evangelist, election in the technical sense of the term is a dogma laid on the shelf. He finds that in the work of appealing to the masses it is more of a hindrance than a help. He can make no use of it; and hence, with the instinct of a revivalist, John Wesley rejected it for himself, and also insisted on his preachers rejecting it as well. Whether he was wise in describing himself as an Arminian because opposed to Calvinism is another matter; but who is always wise? His excuse is that Toplady goaded him into employing this partisan phrase, as Luther in his day was goaded into many indiscreet words and deeds.

But enough of the past. The new Theology must be careful so to re-state election, that it shall fall in with, instead of going counter to, the record of conscience in its conceptions of the ethical character of God. We must not allow our spiritual instincts to be denied and then crushed by the text, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" We must not be told that we are to silence the pleadings of the heart: that God is Sovereign, and that therefore conduct which no earthly father could justify becomes right because the Eternal Father is omnipotent. These are the crudities of the popular Theology, which every critical mind has long seen and secretly deplored. Unfortunately, as a rule, most critical minds confine themselves to mere negative criticism of the popular Theology, without going on, as Kant did,

to a philosophy with a constructive as well as a destructive side. If it is presumptuous to attempt this constructive criticism of Theology, then we are guilty of presumption, but our excuse must be that the Pauline doctrine of election is much too deep and divine a truth to be rejected because of the glosses of later divines. As in a palimpsest we have to scrape off as carefully as we can the patristic in order to get at the classic inscription which is covered over, so we have to do in getting the old truth which was from the beginning, but is hidden underneath the later glosses of divines. It is well worth all that we have written, if we can succeed in convincing men that a Theology may be very Biblical yet very wrong, for "words, like nature, half conceal and half reveal the soul within." The apostle's words, which have been half revealed and half concealed by later Theology, when treated like a palimpsest, point to a bright future for mankind, far off it may be, but at last to all. The true teaching of God's sovereignty should impress us with the thought that He is not frustrated when man fails. The potter has power over the clay, and when one vessel is marred on the wheel, then he instantly makes another. As for these vessels of wrath,—God's failures, if the metaphor may be applied without irreverence,—it is of the unbaked clay that the apostle is speaking. In this case, we suppose, they are cast back into the lump to be again moulded.

This view of the future of the non-elect seems to come near Universalism, but the distinction may be made clear to every candid mind. We can suppose the case of some souls, how many it matters not, which even under discipline here or hereafter (the Æons are all His) may become hardened in sin, and so, like the potsherds baked and broken, be cast out to swell some Monte

Testaccio of the universe, like that hill of broken pottery beyond the Tiber, in which ancient Rome has handed down to modern those relics which are mere rubbish. Here we draw breath, for we have reached the term of all thought on such a supreme mystery. In any case, election looks out in the direction of multitudinism and not of particularism. In this sense, the election of Abraham, whose name was most significantly changed into father of a multitude, is the keynote to all right understanding of this truth. The particularism of Calvinism resembles the particularism of Judaism; both are alike a dwarfed interpretation of a broad and blessed truth. It was not to put an oak into a flower-pot, or to save a small sect or tribe, that God elected Abraham. Election was never intended to dwarf down to selection, as rivers in the interior of Australia are said to lose themselves in the sand. Let us hope that as all rivers reach the ocean, so all instances of God's particularism in the present are but as preludes to the grander music of the future, in which the multitude that no man can number join with the hundred and forty-four thousand in singing the same song of Moses and the Lamb, of redemption from sin here, and of admission into the kingdom hereafter, where sin is not.

CHAPTER IX.

RECONCILIATION WITH GOD: THREE PROGRESSIVE THEORIES.

NEXT to the Being of God, and second to it only, if second at all, is the question of the mode of our approach to Him, "since he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." It is admitted on all sides that redemption or reconciliation with God must take a leading place in any scheme of Theology. It stands in the very front of all the old theological systems. It must hold the same place of pre-eminence in the new, if the new Theology is to take the place of the old, and to satisfy to any extent the spiritual needs of men. In the old Theology, whether Roman or Reformed, Lutheran or Calvinist, sin, and the satisfaction for sin, holds the first place. This is the distinctive Theology of the West, where Soteriology is the prominent aspect of all systematic divinity, as we may say Christology is of the East. On this aspect of redemption, which touches our personal wants as sinners needing deliverance, the more practical Latin mind laid stress, as the Greek intellect, which was speculative, inclined to rest on conceptions of the Divine Being. The Western mind, on the other hand, partly from natural aversion to mere points of speculative divinity, but also partly under the leadership of one commanding mind, the great Church Father St. Augustine, turned to the doctrines of grace, as

they are called, and systematized them into a compact body of teaching, which is the basis ever since of all that is known as systematic divinity in the West. Not to understand this contrast between the course of Theology in the East and West, is to fail to know and to trace to their source that class of truths which we distinctively call the doctrines of grace. Further, not to agree with these doctrines is to put oneself off into a kind of position of semi-Pelagian isolation from what is emphatically "the Gospel" to all instructed minds who take Augustinian Theology as a whole. It would lead us into too long a digression if we were to discuss how it came about that Augustinianism became possessed of the entire field of thought, and moulded into one fixed form of belief the entire Theology of the West. There were many favouring circumstances which led to this, not the least being the fact that Augustinian Theology traversed the whole range of inquiry and experience, from the extreme right of sacramental to the extreme left of intuitional Theology. It was based, in Augustine's case, on a deep personal experience of sin, and of the need of a personal deliverance from sin. In this sense it met the needs of the awakened conscience. It was Protestantism in the germ. On the other hand, it fell in with the sacramental system, it laid great stress on the external Church and the outward channels of grace. We need go no farther than this to understand the reasons why Augustinian Theology has reigned without a break, and certainly without a rival, for twelve centuries, from the fifth to the eighteenth inclusive. The Reformation brought with it a revolt against the scholastic Theology, but it was only to begin a new scholasticism under the shadow of the same great name. The only result of the Reformation was that Augustinianism was rent in two, as

Rome was in her decay, into East and West; but each divided limb of the empire claimed to be the legitimate successor of the great Julius, the first Cæsar. So it was with Augustine. He was the only Church Father who rather gained than lost ground by the Reformation in the general favour of the entire West. Romanists were more anxious even than the Reformers to claim this great doctor as on their side. In Spain, to this day, no sermon is supposed to have the right ring of orthodoxy unless the preacher brings in from his compendium of Theology a tag of Augustine, as in the Spanish cuisine there would be no dish without a whiff of garlic. *Sin Augustino nul predigo* is a proverbial saying in the Peninsula, and every priest's library has a commonplace book of sentences from this doctor. The leaders of the Reformation were equally careful to proclaim their implicit acceptance of Augustine's Theology. In this, Wittenberg, Geneva, and Lambeth all struck the same note. The Dutch Remonstrants raised a feeble note of protest, in the second generation after the Reformation, but it was quickly silenced by the sharp sword of persecution. To differ with Augustine and to side with Pelagius, was to have fallen from grace. It was to go over to the philosophers, which in the seventeenth century was virtually a sentence of exclusion from Church membership, with all its attendant pains and penalties. In an age when Unitarianism was considered so deadly an error as to deserve the death penalty, the Pelagian tendency was supposed to be only its outwork. It was considered to be the first step in the downward career into soul-destroying heresy to decline from the high standard of primitive Augustinianism. The few who attempted to find a middle path, such as the Cambridge Platonists, or the Latitude Men of Oxford, as the friends of Falkland were vaguely called, were all too

few in number, and quite too uninfluential with the mass of mankind, to draw attention to themselves and their Theology. They owed their escape from persecution to their obscurity. They were a mere band of students, men before their time. They had the misfortune, as it has been said of Milton, to be born too soon for their age. In a world deafened with the jarring notes of rival theologies equally dogmatic, they tried to nurse a noble independency of mind in an age when independent thinking in Theology was generally regarded as the mother of all heresy. But time, which brings its revenges with it, and redresses the wrongs of those whose misfortune it was to be before their age, has brought a general change of attitude in our way of looking at what we may, for convenience, describe as the plan of salvation. In our day, it would only seem like raking up the ashes of extinct controversies if we were to point out how completely the age has moved on. Even Scotland has receded from the standpoint of the old dogmatic school, as represented by the General Assembly which expelled Irving for teaching that our Lord's humanity was not merely Docetic, or which deposed Campbell for holding that assurance is of the essence of faith. The new Theology has carried the day along the whole line, not merely on these particular points of school divinity, but also on the deeper questions which underlay these controversies.

The question at issue between the old and the new Theology runs up, as all discussions do between men who are in earnest about divine things, to the central-point of all, in which all Theology pivots. Our conception of salvation will be modified by our conception of the Being of God and of His character? Such as we consider the Divine Being to be in Himself, such we shall consider our relations to Him, and with it our conceptions of the

plan of salvation. To borrow the technical terms of school divinity, our Soteriology will always depend on our Christology. Hence it is, that when God was apprehended rather as the moral Governor of the universe than as the Father of men, whose likeness and image as spiritual beings we were intended to reflect, Theology drew up a class of conceptions of the plan of salvation which were based on this rectoral character of God. It has been said with some justice that the forensic theory of the Atonement, which from Anselm to Grotius has been the current conception of reconciliation by pardon, only took definite shape in the Latin Church as the outcome of Roman law. It was Theology expressed in terms of jurisprudence—the legal conception of God as King and Judge overshadowing every other. There is not only much truth in this remark, but it is also one which divines have overlooked altogether, and even when it was apprehended they have still failed to see the importance of this inter-dependence of Theology on law, and *vice versa*. Sir Henry Maine's great work on ancient law is based on the principle that all positive law embodying itself in a code is historically the outcome of some unwritten law or custom, which, in its turn, is the expression of the ruling ideas of the community from which it springs. This account of the rise of law as the result of custom, the *mos pro lege* principle of positive law, does not stop there. What we call school divinity takes its rise in the same unconscious way by fitting our thoughts into the framework of the ruling ideas of the day. In our simplicity, we profess that our theological conceptions are derived or deduced directly from Scripture; Theology being nothing else than the science of inferences, as we have already described it. If this were so, we should hear less of

the word disputes which make Theology such a tangle of crabbed propositions. The fact is, that there is another factor in Theology which is unsuspected, and all the more powerful because men do not see its source. That is the silent and unobserved influence of juridical conceptions on theological terms. The term διαθήκη, for instance, is uniformly understood to express the idea of a covenant in the Old Testament, whereas in the New (as in that equivocal passage in Heb. viii.) we find another conception which is not so much of a covenant through the death of a victim, but of a testator, and by the testamentary disposition of property. We see in this single instance the transition of thought between two conceptions differing widely from each other. This is only one instance, by the way, of the tendency of law and Theology to act and react on each other. Is it reasonable to say in one breath, as divines do, that Christianity has entered into and moulded our legal conceptions, unless we admit, on the other hand, that this law has reacted on our theological conceptions, and in its turn helped to mould them? If it be true that Theology has helped to mould our modern jurisprudence in its advance from its first vindictive stage to its present recognition of the reformatory system, can we suppose that law, in its turn, has not reacted on Theology? The truth is, as Sir H. Maine points out, society, if progressive at all, is so not in one direction at a time, but in all. Its jurisprudence and its Theology are alike products of the age, and the outcome of its mental concepts. There are three stages of law and three of Theology corresponding each to each, and alike marking the advance of society. In the first stage law is vindictive, purely and simply. It wipes out the offence, if it can, by making a clean sweep of the offender. All crimes are torts or personal injuries

to be personally avenged. It is a debt to be paid either in purse or person. In the next stage society has risen to the sense of something more than a wrong done by one person to another, or even than a blood-feud to be avenged by the tribe as a whole. It has begun to conceive of crime as an offence against the majesty of the law. The satisfaction, in that case, becomes due, not so much to the person offended as to the offended majesty of law. Crime is no longer a case for compensation, which is exacted from the offender, and merely on the *lex talionis* principle. A new conception of society, as a whole, enters in to give a new colour and aspect to crime. It is accordingly on the *in terrorem* principle that punishment is now inflicted, lest by undue laxity the law should be abused. This is the stage which English law had reached about the middle of last century, when a judge could sentence a man to death for horse-stealing, with this strange comment from the Bench: "You are to be hanged, not so much for stealing a horse, but in order that horses may not be stolen." It was only when it was seen that this reign of terror was not the reign of law, and Beccaria had pointed out that it was not so much the severity as the certainty of punishment which acted as the true deterrent from crime, that the administration of English law took a new departure. Our hanging code, as it was called, was laid aside step by step, and we are now entering on the third and last stage of law reform, in which crime is not so much a wrong done to another, or even to that abstraction which we call society, as it is a wrong to the man himself. Crime is now regarded as *culpa*, and it is a *mea culpa:* it is an offence against human nature itself, a kind of disease or insanity for which retribution, it is true, is required, but a retribution which carries with it something reformatory.

There are thus three stages of jurisprudence, in which law is vindictive, retributive, and reformatory respectively, and corresponding to the growth of society—the second being an advance on the first, and the third on the second. There is a corresponding growth in Theology. Our conceptions of sin, and of the dealings of the Divine Being with sin, must advance with the advance of society from a barbarous to a refined code of jurisprudence. In a rude state of society, men are able only to regard evil as a personal affront to the All-Good. We are at the "avenger of blood" stage of Theology, and our conceptions of the mode of satisfaction for sin are accordingly crude. The Anselm and Grotian conception of the Atonement is an advance on this primitive view. Men with the Roman ideas of the administration of law, which, if severe, were on the whole just, began to think of Christ's death not so much as a mode of appeasing the wrath of an offended and angry God on the "stripe for stripe" and "burning for burning" principle, as on the better ground that the broken law requires a satisfaction. God, according to Grotius and the jurists, was the moral Governor of the universe. He had other orders of moral creatures to consider as well as man; and hence, were He to admit the impunity of sin, it would be to let in a fatal principle of indulgence into the moral universe subversive of the very principle of obedience. Hence it is that a satisfaction is demanded to the broken law. During this second stage we are still on the same old ground of the *in terrorem* argument, but it is regarded as a terror to society at large, and not merely to the particular offender. Punishment is regarded as the one deterrent to crime, but the fiction is now brought in, that as the vindication of the broken law is for the sake of others,—angels as well as men,—so the penalty may be borne by another who, in virtue of his Godhead is

as much above angels as, in virtue of His manhood, He is below them. Were punishment merely vindictive on the *lex talionis* principle, we do not see how we could justify at all in the court of conscience the doctrine of Atonement by vicarious suffering. How could a God of justice inflict stripe for stripe and burning for burning on the innocent in the stead of the guilty? This is an objection to the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice which, on the crude vindictive theory of personal retribution, is insuperable. We have never seen it answered. But it must be said, in justice to the Grotian doctrine of the Atonement as a satisfaction, not so much to God as to the law, this objection does not apply. As the law is impersonal, and does not look beyond exacting a penalty, so it is conceivable that there may be a transfer, not of guilt, but of punishment.

So far the Anselm and Grotian doctrine of Atonement, which is still the current one in orthodox theology to this day, is not so immoral as it is made out to be by those who reject *in toto* what they call the "blood Theology." It does not satisfy our deepest spiritual desires, which go much farther than mere escape from punishment, but at least it does not shock them as the older doctrine, which was held in pre-Anselmic theology. Divines then held that God was an angry God, the avenger of blood in hot pursuit of His victim, and whose wrath only could be slaked and diverted from man by the satisfaction of His Son's death. Abraham stretching forth his hand to slay his son was long considered as the true symbol of the Eternal Father exhausting His infinite anger against sin by the infinite merit and worth of the voluntary substitution of His own Son. In this sense, the Incarnation was represented as giving worth to the Atonement, and, indeed, divines up to and including

Anselm, in his *Cur Deus Homo,* taught that the purpose of the Incarnation was to lead up to the Atonement. The end is always of more importance than the means: hence, with perfect consistency, all Theology after Anselm laid stress on the purpose of the Incarnation only as giving dignity and worth to the Atonement. The centre of gravity in the West lay in the second of these truths, as in the East it lay in the first.

But Theology cannot rest on the merely retributive doctrine of the Atonement, which is the second stage of advance, any more than it can on the vindictive, which is the earliest stage of thought on this subject. As jurisprudence has led us on to regard crime as *culpa,* a misfortune as well as a fault, a disease no less than a debt, so a corresponding advance has been made in Theology. The vindictive and retributive stages, alike in law and Theology, are giving way to the reformatory, and the question occurs whether our school divinity is to take back its doctrine of the Atonement and recast it according to the ruling ideas of the age which we live in, or to fossilize in old forms and so be swept away.

To make such a demand a few years ago would have been regarded as equivalent to giving up the doctrine of the Atonement altogether. There is a vicarious element in the death of Christ which all admit who go beyond the old exemplary theory now felt to be defective, even by Unitarians. But what is the true meaning of that vicarious element? The vindictive idea of satisfaction to the person of an angry God is now as good as given up on all sides. There only remains the retributive theory, that the *spectacle* of satisfaction to the broken law was necessary before a public pardon of the race could be pronounced in the face of the universe. God, it is said,

must be just even in justifying the ungodly, and how could this be unless a punishment of some kind were inflicted which would be in some sense an equivalent? So in this way two infinities were set off the one against the other. The infinite demerit of man was supposed to be purged by the infinite merit of the Son of God. His Deity gave worth to the sacrifice, as well as made the substitution possible. But here it is clear that we are on the ground of the old jurisprudence, where a jurist of our day would tell us that this was bad law, and therefore bad Theology. Owing to Beccaria and Bentham's teaching, punishment inflicted for example's sake is regarded as no longer deterrent. Even on utilitarian grounds, such as Bentham stood at, such retribution is immoral, because it fails of its effect. This being so, we must look out for some new ground in the reformatory jurisprudence of our day; nor shall we have long to seek for it.

The modern jurist seeks to deal with crime, it is true, vindictively, but he also aims at producing a deterrent effect on others as well as a reformatory effect on the offender. In a word, all that is good and true in the two lower stages of the repression of crime, are taken up into and incorporated with the higher. So we should proceed to reason in Theology. The only complete and adequate doctrine of the Atonement is one which is comprehensive, and which exhibits all these aspects: (1) God's infinite hatred of sin—this is the first stage; (2) the necessity arising out of His being the moral Governor of the universe to find a satisfaction to the broken law—this is the second; (3) the reformatory aspect of the Atonement, which, though the last to be reached experimentally, is in reality the ground of the two former, and the only sound basis on which the ethical argument for the Atonement can be erected at all. Sin in its deeper and truer aspect is

something more than a personal affront to the Divine Majesty, calling for some avenger of blood, and some "daysman" to stand between. This wild justice of revenge might seem an adequate argument to men in the nomad state of society when the call came to Abraham. To an Arab Sheikh in the stage of civilisation at which Job and his friends stood, such a presentation of the doctrine of the expiation of a blood-feud by the substitution of an unoffending substitute, instead of seeming immoral, would seem a gracious condescension on the part of a Being who is El Shaddai, the Absolute and Irresistible Will of the universe.

So, again, the forensic doctrine which falls in with the second stage in jurisprudence would seem just and merciful to a class of minds trained to the fictions of Roman law, in which even the State only undertook to punish crime by calling in, in a kind of collusive way, the person wronged as promoting the suit, which the State then took out of his hands and prosecuted on its own account. To the modern mind, the exaction of a penalty, due not so much to the person wronged as to that abstraction the law, is clearly a transition from the old vindictive *lex talionis* to the purer conception of wrong as evil, a kind of plague from which society must rid itself by putting the offender in quarantine. But the Anselm and Grotian theory of a transfer of punishment as a certain quantum of suffering from the sinful to a sinless substitute, labours under a load of moral difficulty which has never been fairly faced or honestly met with by argument. It is quite enough to account for the rejection of the doctrine of Atonement *in toto* by all who from Socinus onward have openly broken with Catholic tradition. The forensic Theology of an Atonement by a transfer, not so much of guilt as of punishment, has

always seemed to minds of this order as worse than immoral. The old ransom theory of the early Church, by which a redemption price was paid to Satan, who was regarded as a great slaveowner, was not so immoral as it seems to us, to whom slavery has long been a doomed institution. It conveyed the thought of redemption from bondage into liberty. It had at least a moral side: an element in which justification passes into sanctification, which the forensic theory, held without break by the orthodox in the Western Church from Anselm to Grotius, failed to exhibit. Hence, as we might expect, where the truth was presented in its most distorted form, there the reaction against it has been most pronounced. Calvinism has been unfairly enough described as the parent of Unitarianism; but it is certainly a remarkable circumstance that the most Calvinistic Churches, as those of Geneva and New England, are also the Churches where the reaction against the harsh, commutative dogma of Atonement by penalty inflicted on a substitute has been most marked. But it is only fair to add, that Lutheranism has also had its extremes of dogmatism also leading to its reactions as well as Calvinism. The forensic theory of a double imputation, *i.e.* of our sin to a sinless substitute, and of His righteousness to us on the *obedientia activa et passiva* principle of scholastic Lutheranism, has pushed the theory of Atonement to its farthest limits, and has also led to a corresponding reaction. It is impossible not to see, in what is known as the rationalistic movement in Germany, an attempt on the part of the conscience to break the shackles of a Theology which had ceased to exhibit the character of God in a light which the conscience could accept. Pietism, and what was afterwards derisively known as *Pectoralism*, or the

theologia pectoris, tried to evade the intellectual difficulty by passing it by. But errors cannot be ignored. They must be answered and met, and for want of intelligence in facing the problem and sounding its speculative difficulties, all based on an obsolete jurisprudence, the Pietists of our day, whether here or in Germany, have to bear the weight of an antiquated Theology. It is no use for the Pietist to plead that he knows nothing of such phrases as forensic and federal, and that he contents himself with the language of Scripture, which is also that of his own experience, that Christ is his Saviour, and that He has bought us with that precious blood. The answer is that our experience may be real, but our intellectual mode of apprehending it false; and it is no use forcing the mind through a theological quick-set hedge by this appeal to experience. The revival hymn, "I *do* believe, I *will* believe, that Jesus died for me," indicates well enough this hesitating, undecided state of mind, in which we force the limping intellect through the gap. But emotionalism is not argument, and so when it dies down, as it ultimately does, the old difficulty remains to be answered as we best can.

Hence we are brought to the third and last stage of the doctrine of Atonement, in which the difficulty is fairly faced, and a solution offered which is not out of harmony with the jurisprudence of our day. We have seen that society has long since moved away from the vindictive to the retributive stage of justice, and that the retributive is seen to contain in it the germ of a reformatory system. No judge now inflicts punishment merely in a retaliatory spirit, but as a warning to society that crime cannot be committed with impunity, and also as a lesson to the offender himself. In the purely vindictive treatment of crime there is no lesson at all

to the wrong-doer. But when the retributive rises into the reformatory stage, the lesson to the offender becomes the leading thought of the two. The stage we are now entering on in the doctrine of the Atonement corresponds to this third stage of jurisprudence. All intelligent teachers of Theology now seek to find a moral basis for the doctrine of the Atonement. They may use as they do the old phrases about substitution and satisfaction; but, as is usually the case with divines, they slip into the old phrases a new meaning. They speak of a vicarious Atonement, but they mean a moral Atonement. Nothing is more significant of the change than our reluctance to take the language of our old hymns, and use them in the old dogmatic sense. Such hymns as "Rock of Ages," or "O Christ, what burdens Thou didst bear," are only the old dogma turned into verse; but we shrink from reversing the process, and turning them back into dogma. The truth is that Theology, following in the wake of jurisprudence, has silently, and in most cases unconsciously, on the part of divines, moved up to a new platform. It is not so much as a debt, but as a disease, that we now think of sin. Hence we do not speak of satisfaction or substitution, but of union with Christ: His death is our death to sin, His resurrection is our new life to righteousness. Rom. vi., not Rom. v., torn out of its connection, is now the keynote to the best teaching in almost all schools of Theology; and the fact being so, we have not to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to one section of the Christian Church more than another for having first led us on into the deeper aspect of the subject.

But in entering on this we are bound to be consistent, and as we have more than once pointed out, we must not put new wine into old bottles. If the vicarious

theory of punishment in the person of a substitute is seen to lead to immoral conclusions, we are bound also to show the courage of our convictions. If sin be a disease more even than it is a debt, then we can see how that Atonement by the death of Christ must bear a remedial character. Its reformatory aspect is to take the place of the old retributive dogma. Christ in His death paying the ransom price of our redemption is a perfectly unobjectionable metaphor, if we are careful to drop out of sight any *legal* right of Satan to his satisfaction, or compensation for disturbance of right as a slaveowner. This was the pitfall of mistaken ingenuity into which Origen and certain writers of the Eastern Church fell. Avoiding this error, the ransom doctrine of the Atonement, as it is the earliest, may also be held to be the latest aspect of this truth. But the one essential element of all is the presentation of this truth in such a light that it shall not shock our moral instincts, and then force us to fall back on a dogma of divine sovereignty, representing that to be right with God which would not be right between man and his fellow. This dreadful perversion of Theology, which leads us on to contradict conscience, and then silences its protests by the plea, "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" is now abandoned by all intelligent minds. The minority who use such phrases do so as often as not in pure ignorance that they are playing fast and loose with the very elements of all morality, in asking us to believe that there can be two conceptions of right, one between God and man, and another between man and his fellow. Such minds, as a rule, are intellectually unable to see that they are making the infidelity which they complain of. Setting faith and reason at issue in the court of conscience, they then complain of

reason for demurring to their one-sided deliverance on the subject.

The conception of sin as disease instead of debt brings with it a doctrine of the Atonement, not only in harmony with our modern reformatory code of jurisprudence; it also explains the resurrection of Christ as well as His death. The old dogmatists explain His resurrection in virtue solely of His Godhead. He had paid the price, had borne the penalty, and (assuming the *descensus ad Inferos*, as Calvin with dreadful consistency held to be a descent into hell, in place of the hell-deserving body of the elect) His resurrection then followed in virtue of His Godhead, and because He could not be holden of death after paying once for all the ransom price for His people. But in the New Testament teaching the resurrection of Christ has much more meaning than this. It is a part of, and not a mere consequence from, His redeeming death. Sin being a form of diseased self-hood, we can see how the right remedy must be in the death of the old self and the birth of a new and a better self. The one Ego is to be laid in the grave, and another Ego raised out of its ashes, as the buried seed-corn is the germ of the new plant, the same, and yet not the same, as the old. What could teach this truth like Christ's painful lingering death of agony on Calvary, and His resurrection after a three days' sleep in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea? In this aspect, the spiritual and the historical, the doctrine and the fact, admirably harmonize and throw light on each other. In this aspect the Atonement, instead of being a transaction between two Persons of the Trinity for the benefit of man, with scarcely any moral aspect whatever, becomes a deep opening up of the secret of every man's heart. In this sense the sword that pierces the heart of Christ

reveals the thought of many hearts. With this doctrine of the Atonement we can meet that person much spoken against by theologians, the "mere moralist," in the gate, and answer him on his own ground of intuitive truth. We can go with him into the court of conscience and appeal for a verdict, whether the aspect of the death and resurrection of Christ does not commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

To conclude this survey of the Atonement, seen in the light of modern thought, we have traced out that Theology, like jurisprudence, must pass through two stages, the vindictive and the retributive, before it reaches its present reformatory stage. Our censure, then, of the Theology of the past begins and ends with the remark that it is of the past, and that we must leave the dead to bury their dead. It is no censure to a rude and barbarous age, which held the wild justice of revenge, that it regarded sin quite consistently as a blood-feud passing on, as in Arab tribal life, from generation to generation. It is no censure, again, to the age of Grotius that he reasoned with the jurists of that day that, provided a penalty was exacted as a satisfaction to the broken law, it was not an immoral conception that this penalty should be borne by a substitute. The "ruling ideas" of our age now detect the non-moral element in this fiction of punishment transferred from the sinful to the sinless. We have tacitly abandoned this ground, and there are many—only too many, we regret to add—who hold in consequence no doctrine of Atonement whatever, and simply regard Christ's death as exemplary, and the highest act of obedience of the pattern man. But the third and last aspect of sin as disease, the dementia of self-hood attempting to make

itself its own centre of being, throws a light on Christ's death and resurrection which explains it in all its bearings. We see the dogma in the light of experience, and also experience in the light of dogma; and as deep answers unto deep, we feel that at last we understand God's nature in the light of human nature, and also human nature in the light of God, who in Christ is both God and man.

CHAPTER X.

RULE OF FAITH.

A RULE of faith is a necessity for every theological system. The new school on this subject is bound to be as definite as the old; the only difference between them is as to what is that rule of faith. The phrase, *Regula Fidei*, was understood in patristic times of the Creed. This was the pattern or norm according to which men moulded their belief. In later times it has been understood of the two rival types of authority, according to which men since the Reformation have governed their faith. The note has been either "hear the Church" or "believe in the Book," according as men have leaned against or towards the Reformation. But in any case, both sides have agreed that there must be some external authority in matters of faith, some tribunal whose decision must be final, and from which there was no appeal.

This is the question which we have here to discuss. Is there any final authority in matters of faith, or are we to leave differences in dispute to the private judgment of each? There are three tribunals to which very different degrees of authority are assigned by different kinds of Christians. To some the Church, to others the Bible, and to a third and smaller class still, Conscience or the Inner Light is the only tribunal to which the appeal is laid. Which of these three is the final court of appeal?

Or is it conceivable that a compromise might be struck up, and a kind of co-ordinate authority allowed to all three? Just as in a well-balanced Constitution, the sovereignty or absolute power is in a kind of commission between the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. Whether *lex* is *rex* or *rex* is *lex* was the matter in dispute, when seven judges against five decided that ship-money was lawful in Charles I.'s reign, but in the England of our day each of the three is supreme in its own department. It is only by a *coup d'état*, a kind of phrase for which happily we have no equivalent in the language, that a law could be passed by one of the three against the independent jurisdiction of the other two. We should wish to regard each of these three "rules of faith" in this light: neither the Church, nor the Bible, nor even the enlightened Christian conscience, should have dominion over our faith, while we are to look for direction from all three. Faith by itself, and rightly understood, is personal affiance in a living Lord. It is in Him she trusts, and when she has found Him, she has got beyond all conceptions of mere regulative religion. This would have been a question not so much as mooted in the Christian commonwealth had it retained the simplicity of its primitive faith and the purity of its first love. If there had been no invasion of our liberties by the hierarchical principle in the first instance, then there would have been no reaction demanded, as at the Reformation, to set our faith on a new basis. We should then have been saved those psychological puzzles on the nature of Inspiration, and heard nothing of an Infallible Book as a set-off to an Infallible Church. In the last case of all, the new doctrine of the Christian Consciousness, which Neander and the Mediation school set up and invested with a kind of appellate jurisdiction, would not have been

given the prominence which it has gained unless as a reaction against the discordant cries of rival claimants, the *Bibel Bubel Babel* which Luther scoffed at in his day, and which has been one of the weak points of popular Protestantism ever since. Bossuet was not the first, as he certainly will not be the last, of Roman controversialists to gird at the variations of Protestantism. A hundred sects all derive with equal confidence their dogmas from the same source, and as the conclusions which they come to are in many cases widely different, the only inference is either that the Book itself gives an uncertain sound, or that those who take it for their guide have failed to interpret its obvious meaning. In any case, the taunt is too well deserved—

> "Hic liber est in quo querit sua dogmata quisque
> Invenit et pariter, dogmata quisque sua."

This is one of the melancholy results of our long religious wars, and of the standing armies of controversialists by whom these wars have been waged, that the very conception of faith has lost its true spiritual significance. Instead of being the affiance of a living soul to the living God, the ring which Christ gives, and which His Church wears in token of His espousal, faith has been regarded as the apprehension more or less intellectual of a complicated system of dogma. We have got to talk of "the faith" as if the subject-matter of our faith or affiance had been turned into an object, and as if the bride had some new object of affiance besides the bridegroom.

> "The bride eyes not her garments,
> But her dear bridegroom's face;
> I will not gaze on glory,
> But on my King of Grace."

This is a paraphrase of one of Rutherford's letters, but this is not the temper of the dogmatic divine. To him,

the faith consists of a certain body of credenda and agenda, and these must be safeguarded in some way, and for such a faith there must necessarily be some *regula fidei.* The question then at once arises, What is this rule of faith to be? Is it to be an Infallible Church or an Infallible Book? Before the Reformation, and when the monks were the only copyists, and the only Scriptures in use were those which came out from the *scriptorium* of some monastery, it is needless to say that the question did not admit of dispute. The Church was the witness and keeper of Holy Writ, and as the Book never passed out of her keeping, no question could arise of its interpretation. Biblical criticism was as yet not born at the Reformation. However, the same question began to be asked, timidly at first of the Theology of that day which is asked of the Theology of our day. The Reformers were challenged to produce their rule of faith in opposition to an Infallible Church, and they naturally appealed to an Infallible Book. Strangely enough, it was Chillingworth, who in reality was a latitudinarian before his time, but who had been caught in the meshes of Jesuit sophistry, who defined the Protestant rule of faith in opposition to that of the Roman Church—"The Bible, the religion of Protestants." This was the way in which the point of difference between the two Churches was expressed all through the seventeenth century. The ultimate principle of Romanism, and we must add of Anglicanism in its more rigid forms, is tradition and the Church authority. But if we can no longer hold by an Infallible Book any more than by an Infallible Church, the question occurs, Is there any rule of faith remaining? And this is the question asked in our day, and by consistent thinkers on all sides. We are bound to say, What is the ultimate principle of Protestantism? Has

it any rule of faith? For if none, it must submit to the taunt of being an invertebrate and low type of organism, a religion without a Church being nearly as bad as a Church without a religion in the eyes of all dogmatists. It was easy to parry this lunge of a two-handed sword as long as men held the old dogma of verbal inspiration. They had only to set up its counter-dogma of an Infallible Book as the end of controversy to Protestants, as the Infallible Church was the same ultimate principle to Romanists. But times are changed. Criticism has compelled all candid minds to modify their conceptions of what we may call the Scribe theory of the Scriptures. The books of the Hebrew and Christian canon contain the "word of God." It is all there, but in different measure in different parts. Here in history, there in prophecy, in one book in gnomes of proverbial philosophy, in another in psalms and spiritual songs which have been the keynote of all praise in the Church down to the latest times. The Bible is thus, as a whole, made up of Law, Prophets, and Psalms, of Gospels and Epistles. The same that it ever was, it is still the norm or pattern of faith. No doctrine can be taught, no duty enforced, unless it be drawn plainly and directly from the well-head of God's word written.

In this sense the new Theology takes its stand with the old. But it does so with a difference, and it is this difference which we have now to indicate. When men say that we evade the difficulty by not at once setting up one of the three authorities, the Church, the Bible, or conscience, as the one supreme tribunal, we answer by reference to the key of political stability in any well-ordered Constitution such as ours. There is one point, it has been said, in which we have an advantage over our American cousins, that our Constitution, unlike theirs, is

nowhere set down on paper. It is none the less definite for this reason; on the contrary, it is probably all the more stable. It is impossible to say, in the case of the British Constitution, where the sovereignty lies. Each of the three branches is sovereign within its own limits, and powerless beyond. With the Legislature lies the exclusive function of the working of our laws, while to the judicial is confined the interpretation of these laws; and lastly, to the Executive is left the exclusive responsibility of the police by which these laws are enforced. An Act of Parliament, for instance, however carefully drafted, lays itself open to a certain width of construction, and hence to our judges is left not only much of the interpretation of these statutes in the first instance, but also a certain discretion in the infliction of the penalties which are prescribed by that Act. Lastly, to the Executive is reserved in certain extreme cases the right to suspend these Acts altogether, though it is bound in this case to come to Parliament for an indemnity. It was not all at once, and without a sharp dispute and appeal to the sword as to whether *lex* or *rex* was sovereign in England, that we came at last to the happy compromise which, on account of its very indefiniteness, seems to be the perfection of human wisdom in the difficult art of government. Strictly speaking, power belongeth only unto God. It is too awful a trust to be put, like a naked sword, into the hands of any man or body of men. As for autocracy in the popular sense of the term, as absolute lord of others, it has been truly said, no man can be autocrat who is not first absolutely lord of himself. The man who is above law becomes, for this reason, not merely a law unto himself, which in many cases he is incapable of being, but more than this, he becomes a mere figurehead of the machine of State. The Pope and the Czar are the only

two potentates who even pretend to be autocrats, and we see in the case of both that the *mos pro lege* rules so strongly in both cases, that even their very wish to descend from the giddy height and reduce themselves to the level of ordinary mortals is hindered by the limitations of custom. The result is, that those who are the tyrants of others are the slaves of the very system which they are supposed to control and not merely administer.

For this reason the best government is one like ours, in which, by a succession of fictions, one branch of the administration is called in to check and control the other. For instance, in theory, the sovereign directs the march of every regiment and the course of every ship in the service. In effect, this is the act of the Minister of War or Marine, without whose signature no warrant of the sovereign would have any force of law. But even this minister is checked in his turn, for he is accountable at every step to the two Houses of Parliament, as they also in the last appeal of all are to the country at large; and so power and responsibility with it, like the circle in the water, by wide spreading at last is dispersed to nought.

This balance of power in the Constitution should teach us where to look for what we must call the ultimate principle of authority in matters of faith. It is easier to say where it is not than where it is. The Church, the Bible, and the conscience, these we may describe as the three supports of faith, which rests, like the sacred tripod of the oracle of Delphi, on these three props. In one age of the Church's history, one of these supports was the more prominent, and at a later another. In the Conciliar age of Church teaching, *i.e.* from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, it was an agreed point that a General Council was the true solution of theological differences. Even the Reformers agreed to this, and all

that they demurred to was that a bare majority of Italian priests, meeting on the Italian side of the Alps, and dominated over by the Bishop of Rome, could presume to represent Catholic consent.

In the next age, from the Reformation to our day, the Scriptures, as a whole, have replaced the Church as the ultimate principle of Protestantism; but now the new Theology steps in to vindicate the supremacy of conscience, and to set it up on a kind of pinnacle superior to Church Councils, and even to the letter of the inspired Book itself.

At this point, then, we are asked to arbitrate between the three claimants; and here we fall back on our illustration from civil government, where the best type of Constitution is the one like our own, where the sovereignty rests on a kind of balance, as it were: it is in perpetual commission. Under the guidance of public opinion, the Imperial Parliament passes an Act, which then becomes law. The instant that it is law, it passes from the Legislature to the judicature for interpretation; and even the Executive dare not carry out that Act one step beyond the interpretation laid down for it by the judges sitting *in banco*. In matters of faith we should act under the same threefold restraint. It is pure tyranny to set up any one absolute tribunal, whether objective or subjective. We see from Church history how soon religious reactions pass into formalisms worse than those which they protested against. Within a century we see in three types of faith the falsehood of extremes. At the Reformation an Infallible Church was superseded by an Infallible Book. But the hard literalism of the Calvinistic and Presbyterian party in the middle of the seventeenth century provoked a reaction in favour of the Inner Light, and of the extreme subjectivism of conscience. This was the

doctrine of the early Independents and Seekers, in which Cromwell, Fox, and Milton, from very different points of view, may be said to have sought and found common ground. But soon, only too soon, the fine gold became dim. Independency became another name for Calvinism, and as for the Seekers or Friends, they hardened into a sect which, with many grand qualities, has at last died down into an insignificant minority, whose archaic dress and speech is a gentle memento of religious strifes long since composed. All that was vital in the Quakerism of the past has long since been taken up by other Churches; and, except their protest against war and slavery, there is little to recall to us the special truths which Fox and Barclay so fervently impressed in the letter-worshipping divines of the seventeenth century.

The lesson which this hasty survey of our variations of Protestantism during three centuries should teach us is the danger of trying to fix on any one "rule of faith" as absolute and indispensable. It is not in the Church, or in the Bible, or in conscience singly, but in some combination and composition of all these forces, that we should look for the true normative principle. When we fasten it down to one, we let loose on ourselves one of three forms of spiritual despotism. Faith withers away under an objective tyranny of Church authority, or of Bible literalism, or of that worst fanaticism of all, the promptings of private men, who deliver as oracles the fancies of their own excited brain.

From all these tyrannies faith must be protected, and the new Theology should be well on its guard, lest in escaping the second it does not leave us under the dominion of the third. The history of Transcendentalism, as it is called in New England, is a warning how easy it is to pass out of the old-fashioned, and now out-of-

date Theology, of proof texts of the Westminster Catechism type, into Theologies so wide of the mark, that it is a stretch of charity to describe them as lying within the pale of Theology at all. We have no desire here to turn aside and discuss how much of Christianity remains in this new absolute religion of the Theodore Parkers, and others of that school. It is enough if we indicate where the error lies. It may be described as the attempt to take the balance of the tripod of faith off from one of its three supports, and to rest it on two alone. Conscience and the Bible, or the Bible and the Church as co-ordinate authorities, these are the Protestant and the Catholic ways respectively of limiting the rule of faith, and so of shutting out what may turn out to be an inconvenient witness. The dogmatic divine who rules conscience to be out of court, because the verdict of conscience would not support his assertions by this act of exclusion, clearly convicts himself of one-sidedness. It is the same with the mystical school, who are willing to put the Bible and the conscience together, and to draw out of them a Theology of their own, in which antiquity and Catholic consent alike go for nothing.

In opposition to all this one-sidedness of Protestant Bible Christians on the one hand, and the historical Churchman on the other, we are bound to lay stress on the point, that if faith has any rule at all, it must bear to be judged by the three tests we have referred to, and not comply merely with two only, to the exclusion of the third. But where, it will be asked, is the Church or communion which has always held up these three tests in all their co-ordinate importance? To this we have to answer that, alas! we know of none. Such is the tendency to one-sidedness in Theology more than anywhere else, that the majority of Christians spend

their strength in banking out one class of error, while they make no defence, or next to none, against its opposite. The Protestant securely entrenches himself behind his Bible and his awakened conscience, and looks with scorn on those who are seeking support for their faith in Catholic consent and the unbroken tradition of antiquity. On the other hand, the Catholic or Church school of doctors regard it as a kind of profanation to admit the testimony of conscience into a kind of partnership with the Bible, as interpreted by Catholic consent. This, they say, would be like letting in natural religion to divide the honours with revealed, and they are ready to say with Dryden, in his sophistical apostrophe to reason as subjected to faith—

> "If, then, our faith we for our guide admit,
> Vain is the farther search for human wit;
> As when the building gains a surer stay,
> We take the unuseful scaffolding away;
> Reason by sense no more can understand,
> The game is played into another hand."

The dogmatic school, consistent enough in this, admit reason only into the outer court of the Gentiles. Its place is evidential only, and as soon as faith has got its warrant that the truths most certainly believed among us are at least not unreasonable, then reason has done its part. It must presume no more. It is not for conscience to ask whether certain dogmas commend themselves to the conscience or not. Dryden, in his vigorous sledge-hammer style, deals out hard measure to the Inner Light school—

> "To take up half on trust and half to try,
> Name it not faith, but bungling bigotry."

To a mind like Dryden, who could only conceive of faith as a kind of composition with Heaven for the sins

of a loose life, the less said about calling in the testimony of conscience the better. Even men of purer lives than his have failed to see that faith and a pure conscience are too closely connected to admit of their being sundered. It is essential that all three should be called in as a test of religious truth. The first, or Church authority, is a check and restraint to novelty. An opinion which has never been heard of before must *prima facie* be wrong. The presumption against it is at least enormously strong, and before it can be overcome there must be a weight of Scripture proof, and also of argument on the side of our spiritual instincts, which makes it strange, to say the least of it, that no one has ever struck on it in the past. Hence it is, that within certain limits the argument of prescription is good in Theology. The *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,* is a question-begging test of truth, if taken too literally; but as a way of beckoning off novelties as too weak to bear argument, and too subjective to stand the test of whether they have ever occurred to other minds, to this extent, the appeal to antiquity is legitimate.

We have said enough to point out why all three testimonies, the written word, the faith of others, and our own personal convictions, must concur before a truth alleged to be revealed can be said to rest on its true foundations. The new Theology in this respect will build higher than the old if it consents to go down deeper, and to lay these foundations on a broader basis. We must be prepared to take every truth which we hold dear and to lay it before these three assessors. It must come up, in the first place, with the letter of Scripture on its side. It must rest on no forced or fanciful interpretation. It must not have that suspicious air, of being a house in the water built on piles. Much of our proof-text Theology

will not stand the test of textual criticism. Trinitarian proof-texts, for instance, out of the Old Testament, or expressions in which the Sheol of one dispensation is confounded with the Gehenna of another,—the doctrines of election and utter corruption picked out of certain passages in the Romans, where an uncritical use is made of the argument *ad hominem*,—these are only a few of the *dulcia vitia* of the old school Theology which we must avoid if we are to hope to gain acceptance for the new Theology.

Again, in the next place, we must be careful how we establish the truth of our convictions, even *in foro conscientiæ*. Sometimes its verdicts are quite as misleading as those of Scripture misinterpreted, or of Catholic consent, falsely so called, when instead of consent there is a wide divergence of opinion. It was a great and notable advance when the best minds of the seventeenth century, the Chillingworths and Hales, the Mores and Cudworths, turned from the jangling of dogmatists, Presbyterian and Prelatists, to seek light and leading in the testimony of conscience. But the inner light, as understood by ignorant sectaries, soon became as great a Babel of sounds without meaning as the old dogmas did, when Protestant and Catholic were the only war-cries. There is little doubt that weariness was the cause of the long spiritual stupor of last century, the *sæculum Deisticum* which reigned without a break till the Moravian and Wesleyan revival had opened up fresh springs of spiritual life alike in Germany and England. All three rules of faith, the Bible, the Church, and the Conscience, had been singly and separately tried and found wanting, and then men began to despair of revealed religion, and settled down to natural as the best substitute for it. They did not see that the fault lay in themselves, and in

the partial and exclusive way in which they had set up and used their rule of faith. The Puritans, the Protestants, and now the Seekers or Inner Light men, had all offered a panacea for unbelief; but the public conscience turned from them, not because of what they held, but because of what they refused to hold. Even the broad divines of that day would be considered narrow, according to our modern standard of thinking, on account of the want of a certain sweet reasonableness, that "give and take" disposition which perhaps was not to be expected when men had to answer for their faiths with rack and boot. Milton could not argue with Salmasius without indulging in fierce invective, which not only sours the temper, but also dims our sense of truth. How could the doctrine of the supremacy of conscience, and the directness of the inner light, commend itself to the world who heard the doctrine discredited by one class of divines, and so doubtfully understood by another that the light which was in them seemed to be darkness. The Cambridge Platonists were such scholastics in style, and so steeped in a *verbiage* which is English only by courtesy, that it would have been a miracle if they had been understood by any one who only knew his mother tongue. These were not the men to replace Bunyan and Baxter as the lights of the people, and, indeed, they never dreamed of doing so.

It has been an interesting discovery to the Broad Church school of our day to find that they have any ancestors at all in Church history, and are not, as Napoleon once said with proud humility, "the first of my family." For this reason the Cambridge Platonists have been exhumed and set up as progenitors of the school whose central thought is the supremacy of conscience. But none would have been so much surprised

as these worthies at the posthumous honours paid them. They would have shrunk from it, and claimed to be no more than links in the long chain of mystical divines reaching down through the Middle Ages, and who affected an air of philosophic pietism in order to escape the dreaded charge of heresy, and to shield themselves within the Church against the tests of dogmatism from which they shrank.

Here we may conclude. The Church of the future has no such reasons for reserve, and so we may fearlessly go on to apply these three tests as our rule of faith. Is a doctrine scriptural; does it meet the needs of the conscience; and has it any roots in antiquity? Building on these foundations, the new Theology may fearlessly claim to be both new and true; it is also more than a philosophy, it is part of the faith once delivered to the saints.

CHAPTER XI.

INTUITIONAL THEOLOGY AND INTROSPECTIVE.

THE old Theology was introspective, the new Theology is intuitional. The distinction is more than verbal. It is a difference in their point of departure, and the contrast widens the farther we pursue it. The purpose of the present chapter is to point out this contrast, to note the limitations of the old Theology, and the larger horizons which open on the new. Both were experimental, *i.e.* both went to human nature to find a verification of its inferences from Scripture. But the old Theology went to human nature to establish its truth in one single aspect only; the new is bolder, and lays its appeal to humanity as a whole. The one sought its foothold in the conscience, in the sense of sin, a single experience, and the deepest of all, as we admit, but still only one. The other takes man as it finds him, and as neither better nor worse than the average, and appeals to him on the broad ground of humanity. *Homo sum, humani nil alienum puto*—this is its base line of experience. It is not Pauline, or Augustinian, or Lutheran, in its reading of the human heart. It rather inclines to say there are many pedagogues or preceptors preparatory to Christ. The law of Moses was one of these, and the only one of the many which we can describe as *authorized* to lead up to Christ. But as Christ lifted-up draws all men

unto Him, so there are many schools of thought, and many pages of human experience, all introductory to the one Teacher and the one Book. The human heart is a harp of a thousand strings. The old Theology played, and played admirably, as we admit, on one single string, the sense of sin and the need of forgiveness. But a gospel, to commend itself to all men, must be a gospel like Christ Himself, in whom there is neither male nor female, wise or ignorant, bond or free.

The old Theology then was introspective, as we have seen, the new is intuitional. Let us now proceed to point out a few of the contrasts between these two preparations for Christ. By an introspective type of Theology we mean one which, consulting itself, discovers in human nature, by the light of the word of God, a great gap or defect. It finds the presence of something which, for want of any more definite expression, it names sin. That deepest of all intuitionalists, the Apostle Paul, tells us that he found in himself two laws, or rather two natures, warring within him, a law of obedience and self-restraint, and a law of disobedience and self-indulgence, so that he was brought to a stand at every moment, and felt himself in a state of miserable inconsistency. If he had been thoroughly bad or thoroughly good—a Satan of pride, such as Milton has grandly conceived, or a seraph lost to self-consciousness in the adoring sense of the holiness of God—he would have been happy because self-consistent. But his misery lay in this, that he could not do the things that he would, and worse than all, that when he would do good evil was present with him. His best moments were thus his worst; his holiest aspirations were those that were blended with the darkest sense of despair. His thoughts were harpies, unclean birds, descending on the sacrifice

and defiling with their touch the burnt-offering from which the sweet smell of incense had already begun to go up.

It is easy to describe all this as morbid, and to compare Saul of Tarsus to a melancholy Hamlet, wise in vain, and with the native hue of resolution sicklied over by a Pharisaism which had turned in on itself, instead of exhausting itself outwardly, as was the case with others, his equals in the law. The experiences of Saul of Tarsus are admittedly the most profound *præparatio Evangelii* that God ever gave His Church, and has been regarded as the norm or pattern on which several, if not all, the most distinguished Church teachers have been since moulded. Augustine, Luther, Pascal, Wesley—these are only four names, but all of the first rank in Church history, born in different ages and reared under various conditions, but who all reflect this same sense of indwelling sin, this deepened and even morbid introspection of the evils of their own heart, which in Saul of Tarsus went down into the dark under-world of inner despair and mental misery, such as wrung from him the cry, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

There is no such experience, it is needless to say, in Greek and Roman life. Hellenism has nothing like it; we may even add that Hebraism, unless in one or two of the Psalms, never strikes such a dirge as this. The *Domine dirige* of one or two of the penitential psalms approaches it, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah are quite as plaintive. But then it is Israel as a whole in the person of its poet and prophet. It is a collective, not a personal wail; it is the experience of one who, like Isaiah, typifies some anointed Messenger on whom the Lord has laid the iniquities of us all. But in the case of the Apostle Paul, recording his past experiences of this sense of sin, it is personal and individual. He is alone with

God and supremely miserable, because he has learned in his solitary musings that there are two opposite tides of feeling in his breast; the one bears him on towards saintship and the other towards self-hood. He loves at one time what he ought to hate, and hates at another what he ought to love. He is a puzzle to himself, as Augustine was in his ever-memorable *Confessions*, the strangest chapter of human history after Romans vii. ever written by human pen. This unique character of the Apostle Paul's preparation for Christ has dominated Theology ever since. On the whole for good, but truth passes into error, as food becomes poison if laid up too long and left to ferment. We must beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy; and Paulinism, which is Pharisaism regenerated, soon passes back into its former self, when it is drawn out into system, and the part is taken for the whole. A single experience of the human heart, even the deepest, must not overshadow all the rest. One string of the harp, with its plaintive wail of sorrow, "Oh wretched man that I am," leading up to the jubilant note, "I thank God through Jesus Christ," must not drown all others. We must not be selfish in our very protests against self-hood. God fulfils Himself in many ways. He is the Father of a large family. There are other schools of Christ besides the law, and other pedagogues besides Moses.

The earlier and better apologists all without exception maintained this. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*, recurs to the thought that Plato no less than Moses is a preparation for Christ. In some respects Platonism is even a better preparation of the gospel. It singles out at least one aspect of truth, our longing for an ideal of goodness and truth in human form, which the law with its dumb types failed to teach, and which prophetism

only dimly touched on in the ideal "servant of Jehovah." The old Theology, as a whole, shut itself in to one single school of experience, and that we admit the very best of all, but for that very reason not equally adapted for all. It was the monkish or rather Old Testament theory of sanctification by separation over again. "In Jewry is God known: His name is great in Israel;" but this truth becomes a lie if we add that nowhere else can God be known. To this tendency towards monastic asceticism monkery in one age of the Church and Puritan asceticism in another, we owe those frequent reactions, one of which we are passing through. The age we are in is an age of anti-Puritanism quite as marked as the Renaissance was a reaction against the dominant asceticism of the Church for five centuries. The Renaissance had its Rabelais laughing at monkery in his easy-chair; it had its Bacon to write down scholasticism; its Erasmus to herald in humanitarianism, even while himself wearing a monk's hood. Our age, in the same way, has its critics of the "sweetness and light" school to write down the old Theology of our popular Protestantism, and to describe it as Philistinism; it has its fleshy school of sensualist poets of the Swinburne type. We rejoice that in our day we have seen the rise of a new and serious school of manly thinkers, who can mate secular and spiritual together, and "so make one music as before" of the jarring notes piped and harped by so-called prophets of the Hebraist and Hellenist type. Our age also, since one extreme engenders another, has its æsthetic and spiritualizing poets, in whom all sense of form is lost, as in Browning's case, in the attempt to convey a thought too subtle to bear description. These and others are only a few results of reaction. They are the outcome of our anti-Puritan age, they are the humanitarians of the

nineteenth century, and rank among its leading lights, as Ficinus, and Pico de Mirandola, and other Florentine friends of the new learning were the heralds of the coming Reformation, the morning star of a dawn which had not yet risen in Europe.

We may make too much and also make too little of what has been called by an unmeaning adjective "broad Churchism." The epithet "broad" loses its meaning when we are no longer under the yoke of the narrow Church, which blindly clings to the past. The controversy, happily, out of which the Broad Church school took its rise, has died down in our day. The muscular Christian no longer calls for a Charles Kingsley to write poems in praise of athleticism, as if, like cleanliness, it was next to godliness. We now smile at these extravagances. Among the theologians of our day that kind of apology is no longer needed. The best divine is the man who sweeps before his own door, and so takes away the reproach from orthodox circles, that Christians are anti-humanists. The fair humanities of Greece and Rome (a phrase so unmeaning to those who know the true genius of the classics) only gets force, and awakes a response as the cry of the stifled conscience of humanity. It is a voice heard in the fifteenth century from the cell and from the cloister, calling out for fresh air and free thought. On the *nititur in vetitum* principle, men who had been reduced to the sorry diet of breviaries and missals longed for the forbidden fruit of Homer and Horace. Four centuries ago there were too many palimpsests in the libraries of the convents. Too many parchments had been scribbled over with patristic writings, in many cases not worth the copyist's ink. This provoked a reaction, and that reaction has been called the Renaissance or intellectual revival. It was strongest

in Italy, where the little finger of clericalism was thicker than its loins elsewhere. But the reaction ran its course all over Europe, and lasted as long as the necessity for it existed in the resistance of the clergy to the new light of classical learning.

We shall understand our own age all the better from this reference to the Renaissance of a past age. We are in the full ebb tide of anti-clericalism all over the world. In the Protestant West we describe it as anti-Puritanism, and the Rabelais of our day raises the laugh against those Philistine-Protestants of the old dogmatic school divines who have turned Pauline Theology into a new form of spiritual despotism. But reactions are only short-lived. They have no root in themselves. They are parasites, and wither with the old tree in whose hollow bole they take root, while they live on its decay. The time has come for something better than reaction. The age calls out for something not merely negative but positive. It asks for a conviction instead of the east wind of empty criticism. It has begun to weary of those sneers at the Philistine-Protestant which is the entire stock-in-trade as a theological critic of that "polished icicle," the author of *St. Paul and Protestantism.* Our endeavour then should be, before touching a stone of the old Theology, to prepare a home for the people in a new Theology which shall be quite as home-like and far more stable. The demolishers of old rookeries are properly restrained by the Legislature from beginning their work as demolishers. They may not clear a whole quarter of a town at a time, and so make a solitude and call it peace.

The same restraint should be put on divines who see the defects of the old, and are not prepared to offer the people something better instead. Of God it is said in

the psalm, "His desire is towards life," as Luther's version well puts it, "*Sein Lust ist gegen Leben.*" In God all is positive, and even the privative and punitive aspects of His dealings with men is a preparation for a better and a new order of things. For this reason we have called the Theology of the future "Intuitional," and our antithesis with "Introspective" is more than a play on sound. It is as real in its way as the contrast of a diphthong and vowel of the Homoousion and Homoiousion of Nicene times, at which Gibbon flings a solemn sneer. The mistake of the "Introspective" was, that it was too limited and partial. It regarded human nature under a single aspect, the sense of sin, and made this the single school of preparation for Christ. It was deeply and devoutly Biblical, and for all that it taught we cannot be too thankful. But if its strength grew out of its very limitation, so also this was the cause of its weakness. It provoked a reaction which we are at present suffering from. Some of these reactions, such as "Broad Churchism," "Muscular Christianity," and such-like newspaper phrases, show how short-lived the reaction is in itself; and unless something better is provided, the age will drift on into Agnostic indifference. In the case of many persons trained in strict evangelical piety of the hereditary type, this has unhappily occurred, casting a slur, in this way, on the Pietism which led to such sorry results.

What, then, are we to do? To go back is impossible. Of all reactions, the reaction against a reaction is the most hopeless. This is the midsummer madness of men who have no philosophical outlook, and who lack even common sense to understand the temper of the age they live in. All who remember its rise know what the Oxford movement has resulted in: in the same way

the attempt to call up from the dead the old Puritanism would have results quite as melancholy. A sturdy soul here and there among the old leaders of the experimental school of Theology, known as evangelical, may stand like Cato, brought to bay at Utica, and prepared to die, sword in hand, against a world in arms. This is magnificent, but it is not war. We must do better than this, if we do not wish to be cut to pieces ourselves, to see our camp taken, and our cause left to the survivors—two or three at most—of a forlorn hope.

The positive ground, then, that we take up is this, that our intuitions, if truly sounded, are all alike spiritual, and lead up to God. That men do not interpret their intuitions aright, is no objection against their existence. Of the wicked it is said, "God is not in all his thoughts;" but what of that? This only convinces us the more that such men are the wicked. This is part of the definition of the man who first walks, then stands, and lastly sits in the seat of the scornful. Turning then from those who are moral monsters, and who are spiritual only in the sense that men may have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not, we lay our appeal before mankind at large. Take any crowd of men and women streaming along the streets to their business and pleasure, a thousand taken in this way at random out of the many thousands which fill our great cities, and who throng our churches on one day of the week, and our theatres on another. It is to such that we lodge our appeal, and it is from their response that we attempt to construct what we call the Theology of intuition.

The answer of that crowd is that they are men and women with a multitude of wants, a few wishes, more or less articulately felt, and a will, the centre of their nature, the citadel of their character. This will or character

beats so feebly, that, like the heart, the pulse of the machine of life, they can only feel its beating now and then, at a moment of deep sorrow or joy. Now, this "still, sad music of humanity," as a whole, has a meaning, or ought to have, for others beside poets. Preachers, if they were prophets at all, should know who touched them, as was once said in taunt, but untruly, to One who knows only too tenderly who touches Him. We take man as a whole then, and sound his intuitions, holding, as we do, that the Gospel is the divine response to all those needs. The only stipulation which we make is that these intuitions must be met in their true order. It would be of no use to appeal to men's intuitions, if in answer to this demand for the deepest desire of their soul they only say that they are conscious of a number of wants mostly of the animal type, "What shall we eat? what shall we drink? wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The divine Teacher, with all His tenderness, rebuked His disciples for beginning at this the wrong end of human nature, and while He fed five thousand, He also warned us to seek first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness. Reversing the rule of taking care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves, He bids us take care of the one thing needful. He calls for a law of proportion in life: our temporal interests are to claim a certain amount of our thought; but our eternal interests are those which call for our best thoughts, and which, like God's law, we are to meditate on day and night.

The intuitional Theology, then, as much as the introspective, calls on us to begin at the right end. We may dismiss our wants, or rather postpone their consideration: but we have now to ask what place are we to give to our wishes? Here we are on more debateable ground. Here

we are at the meeting-point between the animal and the spiritual in man, and here, accordingly, it is that too many men make provision for the flesh (the *πρόνοια σαρκός*, an antithesis lost in the English), which lies at the very root of evil in man. If our wants are a swarm as of ants, our wishes are a cloud as of flies, little, winged, buzzing, stinging things; they goad us on to concupiscence in all directions. We must bring our wishes as well as our wants into subjection to some principle more central and near the seat of government in man. This is the will or conscience, God's masterpiece, if we may use such a phrase of comparison without irreverence. No want ever rises or can rise in the lower parts of our nature, no wish ever flit out of the place where fancy is bred, whether in the heart or in the head, but this want or this wish must come up into the presence of the will to be stamped with the government stamp before it is issued as a fiat of our nature. Hence it is that we are what we will. "We are what we eat," says the cynic, who wishes to laugh at himself—*Man ist was man isst.* "We are what we wish when we put on our wishing cap," says the idealist, who only half believes his own statement, and never seriously acts on it unless he is on the road to Bedlam. But in opposition to these false accounts of human nature, which place the centre or governing principle of man either in our bodily desires or our intellectual fancies, it is true that the conscience is the rightful lord, and that "we are what we will to be." The moralists, with Kant at their head, have laid down this supremacy of will, and the only objection to their account of the matter is felt as we read the first page of Kant's *Ethics.* He is quite unanswerable in the thesis with which he sets out, that there is only one real, intrinsic, and inalienable good in the world, which is a good will. But

having correctly described the central governing and root principle of our being, he leaves us in the dark as to how the supremacy of the will over the lower nature is to be asserted and made good. It is here that all moralists hold the word of promise to our lips, and cheat us in the deed. They tell us what the governing principle ought to be, but they do not point out how it is to make good its rule. The will, in fact, may be compared to a child-king with a crown on his baby brow. He reigns, but he is unable to govern, and, as we see from the examples only too common in history, he is the prey of favourites. There is a council of regency, and at its head a queen-mother, who, from the nature of the case, is the worst of all advisers, as she is usually herself the slave of her confessor or her court favourite. The result of this prolonged minority is that "two authorities are up, neither supreme," and a state of society results like that which led to the wars of the Roses in England, or of the Fronde in France.

Our wills, in a word, are ours, but we know not how. The line goes on truly to add, "our wills are ours to make them Thine." This is the defect in the Kantian, as in all Stoical Ethics, which leaves them so barren of teaching to mankind. As far as they go they convey a great truth, or rather a protest against a great lie. They repudiate the brutal theory—

> "I bow to ne'er a god except myself,
> And to my belly, first of deities,
> To eat and drink your daily food and drink."

It is not in his wants or wishes in which the true centre of manhood lies; it is in the noumenal as opposed to the phenomenal life. But the abstract question of the rightful supremacy of will is not enough. We have to set it up as ruler *de facto*, not merely *de jure*. We

have to see how we can use conscience as the voice within, the oracle of God in every man's breast, and to get from it some decisive answer as to the true needs of man. Can we lay our appeal to every man's conscience, and say, with the saintly Augustine, Fecisti nos tibi, et cor irrequietum semper, donec requiescat in te—Thou hast made us for Thyself, and the heart is restless till it rests in Thee. The usual answer to this difficulty of the Theology of intuition is that we must appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober, *i.e.* from the careless and sense-loving mass of mankind to those who walk by faith and not by sight, whose eyes are turned away from beholding vanity, and whose ears are purged from the Babel notes of a godless age.

But what is this but to admit that in the case of the majority these intuitions out of which a spiritual religion is to be built up are virtually non-existent. *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.* For our part, we must feel that if we have to concede as much as this, that which remains is not worth standing out for. We may as well, in that case, go back to the position of the old Theology, that man is so far blinded by the Fall that we may as well give up the claim for there being any inner light at all left.

But is it so? "Our wills are ours." Here at least is a fact, whether we go on or not to say, "to make them Thine." Now, if our wills are ours in the sense that not one want can stir in the lower, or one wish flutter in the upper chambers of the soul without a consent more or less explicit of the will, what is this but to admit the very point in question? "Our wills are ours;" we are lords of ourselves. Must we not go on with Byron to describe this as a "heritage of woe"? None of us can feel that we are ends in ourselves. All our lower faculties

are means to an end, which is self-control and self-culture; but none, not even Kant or Goethe, the one the Stoic of the Will and the other the Stoic of the Intellect, can pretend that culture and self-control is our final end. This self-command, in its turn, must be the means to some higher end. We cannot conceal from ourselves that we must die. This is the great arbiter in such discussions, and without some outlook into eternity what is culture but laborious trifling, and what is self-control but turning the crank of a treadmill in a prison of despair? If in this life only we have hope, we are one and all, philosophers as well as Christians, of all men most miserable.

Our intuitions, then, push us on in this way till we reach the shore of time, where God and eternity lie before us. Our wants lead up to our wishes, and our wishes to our wills, where we touch the true point where the phenomenal passes into the spiritual. At this point our intuitions force us to some conclusion with regard to God and eternity. Here the index on the dial points to the unseen and unknown, and here we may break off and make the great decision a happy or a fatal one, in proportion as we elect to hold, either that God is to be known in Christ or that He is unknowable. Looked at from without, and by the aid of phenomena only, all that the Agnostic says is true. But is this a complete induction? Are there not spiritual instincts in us? Are there not voices in the night, whispers of conscience and echoes from the presence chamber which we dare not slight on our peril?

It is in proportion as men make this induction that they reach the ground on which a spiritual religion is conceivable. It is here that we ask the question to which revelation at once provides us with an answer—"If any man will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine."

It is in the ground of an honest and good heart that we must seek the true seed-plot of all our spiritual intuitions. Faith and conscience are so related, that to slight the conscience, which is the compass, as passion is the sail of the soul, is to make shipwreck of faith. In the Theology of intuition, then, we begin by consulting our nature aright, and rising from the outer to the inner, from our wants to our wishes, and again from our wishes to the will, we at last reach the point where our wills, which are ours, lead us up to God. The true function of the will is to exert control over all the lower nature, and to yield submission to that which is above nature. This craving of the will to enforce submission in one direction and to yield it in another direction, seems to point to the revelation of a God who is the Father of our spirits as well as the Redeemer of our souls from the evil of sin, and who is also the Sanctifier of the whole nature, body, soul, and spirit.

Is it too much then to say that our intuitions, if truly consulted, would lead us on step by step into every truth of Theology which, regarded singly and dogmatically, seem to be so remote from the range of our nature? The old introspective Theology, true as far as it went, found in fallen human nature the sense of sin and the corresponding need of a Saviour. This was enough for it, as it certainly is enough to bring comfort and peace to any awakened and contrite soul. "I am a great sinner, but Jesus is a great Saviour"—this is a short creed, but it is a saving one, and any soul cannot be far wrong who can make this confession of faith. But consciousness rightly consulted has other deliverances besides this sense of defect within, which we call sin. It has its own ideals. It longs for perfection, it desires the open vision of God, and is dissatisfied until it can reach a condition of being

in which every organ of our nature may develop itself to its utmost perfection. These are intuitions after God, holiness and heaven, all of which are met in the Christian revelation.

The promise, moreover, of the Comforter exactly meets the case of our spiritual intuitions and their gradual unfolding. It is said that He shall guide us step by step into the whole truth. It is more than the leading of a kindly light, whether without or within—whether of conscience or the written word. The promise of the Comforter implies the presence of some one who is a Person—of one who is to stand to us in the same relation in which Christ stood to His disciples during the days of His flesh, when He guided them by His eye, taught them by His mouth, and led them by the hand of example. Such is the office which the Holy Ghost is said to discharge in this dispensation. He is, moreover, able to give us an assurance that we may know all things: and when we ask what this inward witness of the Spirit is, the answer is very simple. Here it is that intuitional Theology is on its true ground. Here we take our stand on experience, which, however strange it may seem, is so attested by the language of all believers that the dogmatist and the doubter, who are often strangely akin to each other, cannot dislodge us from it by the mere objection that it is foreign to him. The witness of the Spirit is the same as that inner light about which so much confusion has arisen from inattention to the truth that Christianity is the religion of the enlightened conscience. Christ is the answer to all our spiritual intuitions or needs. The strength of the Christian evidence lies, then, in this sense of correspondence between the subjective and the objective. A mere historical religion on the one hand is a *caput mortuum;* on the other hand, these yearnings of

soul which we call intuitions are groanings which cannot be uttered, until He who searcheth the heart and makes intercession for us, according to the will of God, descends and takes up His abode in our hearts. This indwelling of the Holy Ghost is the consummation of all our internal training, as it is of all that Christ came to do and suffer in the flesh. Here objective and subjective meet, and unless our intuitional Theology leads up to this, it is like a labyrinth without a clue, a path with no outlet, but ending in a blind alley. There is too much of this mock spiritualism in our day, which, as one extreme produces another, took its rise in opposition to the dogmatic or mere historical school of Christianity, and is, the one as much as the other, a defective draft of the whole truth. To paraphrase a celebrated thought of Pascal, we should say that it is not good to teach man that he is a spiritual being, without also teaching him the way by which those intuitions are met and directed to Christ as their true goal and aim. Again, it is not good to tell him of Christ, without pointing out how He is the true supply of all the needs of our nature. It is a worse thing still to withhold the knowledge of both these truths from us, but it is the best of all teaching to teach them in their direct and indissoluble connection. This is the aim of the intuitional Theology of the future, and if we have succeeded in showing where the old Theology of introspection was partial and this is perfect, we shall perhaps have succeeded in making good our case for suggesting a Theology of the future as an advance on that of the past. The criterion of a new truth is that it is at once new, and yet not new. This St. John glances at when he reminds his followers that the commandment which he gave them was the old commandment which was from the beginning, and yet which was

new in them, as every old truth is when it comes back to us with fresh sanctions, as the law of Sinai itself was a new law when taught with the better promises of the Sermon on the Mount. This is all that we mean by the contrast between introspective and intuitional Theology. The one consults human nature under one single aspect, but the other under every. The one takes the experience of one apostle, Paul, the other of all the apostles. The one takes conscience as it is in some, the other as it is in all men, unless by rejecting conscience they quench the light that is in them, and then how great is that darkness!

CHAPTER XII.

ON LIFE A STATE OF PROBATION.

That life is a state of probation, and that character once formed here is formed and fixed for eternity, this is the assumption of the popular Theology which we have now to criticize. The problem presents itself to us, as every other problem in Theology, in a mixed form. It is partly a spiritual intuition which lies at the basis of all our moral consciousness, but also partly a formula of scholastic Theology which the moral sense only imperfectly vouches for, and which is based in the main on certain slender and arbitrary inferences from the letter of Scripture. That there is some probation in life no one will dispute who admits that character, if at all, is formed here; but that life as a whole is a *state* of probation seems too wide an inference from the facts of the case as vouched for by the joint light of consciousness and Scripture. To disentangle what is primitive from what is factitious in this doctrine of probation, is the object of this chapter. We do not turn aside here to discuss any of the many pre-existence theories of life which, under one disguise or another, are profoundly modifying the course of speculation in the West. It would seem as if the East had for the first time in history changed sides with the West, and instead of passively resisting our ideas had in its turn become aggressive. Buddhism, as

if retaliating on Christianity for having broken in on her dream of Quietism, has apparently become militant. We have molested the ancient solitary reign of these moping owls of opinions, pre-existence, and the Buddhist ideal of life: and now this sad day-dream of all existence being an evil, and that death is better than life, is invading us in return for our disturbing its slumbers.

This mode of explaining the evil of present existence by throwing back the mystery into the pre-conscious past is gaining ground in the West, partly because it is an old theory presented in a new dress, and as such attractive to a large class of minds on the look-out for any new aspect of the burden of life: but principally because it is a reaction against the hard and clear-cut dogma of Western thought that life is a *state* of probation, and that we carry with us the entire load of responsibility for our conduct in life into the eternal world. Individualism, based on the Cartesian dogma that each human being is a separate "soul," has long been regarded as the basis of all sound thinking on the subject of Theology, and as such was not so much as to be questioned. Now the ground is opening all at once under our feet, and instead of Individualism we are catching glimpses of another truth—viz. the solidarity of the race and of collective consciousness. Some would push this as far as the Buddhist conception of pre-existence. They see in this the only explanation of the miseries of life; it accounts to them for that law of vanity to which the creature is now subject. Others see in physical evil only the shadow projected by good: it is the striving after an ideal which we fail to attain to at first, and in failing fall into a lower level. All evil is from this point of view only imperfection, "the desire of the moth for the star, of the dawn for the morrow,—the striving for something afar from the scene of its sorrow."

We do not mean here to discuss these bypaths by which men turn aside from the old Theology. The distinct and clear-cut assertion of individuality on our part seems to be a correlative of our belief in a personal God. One God—one separate soul in each human unit, and one term of existence by which to determine its final relation to God—these may be said to be the "Three Unities" of all Christian thinking on this subject. We should be the last to question these; but if they are to be upheld in their integrity as fundamental truths on which Theology is to rest, they must be cleared from certain misconceptions which have gathered around them as the result of that mixture of iron and clay which we call modern Theology.

The probation theory of life stands out in marked contrast with the Buddhist theory of pre-existence. It is clear that if the former be true, the latter is false. It is needless to add that we take our stand with the former. But with a watchful enemy at our gate, and while many who have broken with the Christian tradition in all its forms are proclaiming that the Buddhist account of the entrance of evil into the world is more logical and self-consistent than the Christian, it behoves us to see that we are not surprised and our position stormed. The old truth must be restated, and one of its most startling inconsistencies cleared up, if Christian Theism is to hold its ground against Pantheism and Pessimism, the two forms of Oriental thought which are now arrayed against it.

In the first place, how are we to reconcile extreme Individualism with the doctrine of original sin? If each soul came into the world like a sheet of white paper on which, as Locke maintained, each of us in life is able to write what he pleases, and to make his own character as

we should say, setting it down in his own handwriting, then this account of life would be self-consistent. This is the logical outcome of Cartesianism. But the white sheet of paper theory is far too shallow to account for the facts of the case. Not only are there mystic traces of heredity in each of us by which character is, as it were, formed for us beforehand by the character and conduct of our parents, but also there is a strange defect in us all, and a bias to self or passionate impulse (the ὀργή of SS.), by which we show what is called by the apostle the "carnal mind." Whether we describe this inherited bias to evil as original sin or not, whether we hold it to be a birth taint inherited from our first father Adam or a defect of grace, the penal consequence of his original lapse, it comes to the same thing. The fact is the same, whatever our explanation of it may be. There is undeniably something which bars us from saying that we enter life as a whole as a state of probation.

New Theology has to deal with the same problem in our day as the old Theology had. It has to face the Sphinx and answer its riddle, it has to explain how life can be a state of probation in face of that fault and corruption of our nature that we call original sin. It is clear that the more rigidly we hold to this "vitium et depravatio" doctrine of the Ninth Article of the English Church, in which Calvinist and Lutheran are agreed, the less we can consistently admit that we enter life in a state of moral equilibrium, and therefore able to meet the test of the formation of character such as the probation theory of life supposes. What we put into the one dogma we must take from the other. The Tridentine Theology is more consistent in this than the Reformed. It holds with Aquinas and the scholastics, that Adam was originally created mortal, but had the superadded gift of

immortality. Hence the result of the Fall was simply a withdrawal of certain spiritual gifts, and a reduction of man to the state in which he would have been in without them. Bellarmine thus enunciates this theory: "The state of man after the fall of Adam differs from the state of Adam in what was purely natural to him (*in puris naturalibus*) no more than a man who is stripped differs from a naked man." From this point of view original sin is not a positive quality or an inherent evil disposition, but simply an absence of the original righteousness.

Thus the scholastic account of original sin, which is semi-Pelagian, escapes the dilemma into which the more rigorous Augustinianism of the Reformers is involved. Those who hold that original sin is something positive, and not merely privative, and who go as far as the Westminster Confession in holding the imputation of the actual guilt of Adam's transgression to his posterity, are led to this contradiction. They advance and retract at the same time the doctrine of man's responsibility. They hold that life is a state of probation—a preparation for a higher life; and yet, in any serious sense of the term, it is no probation at all, since the race is judged and condemned already. The whole human family is alike, a *massa perditionis;* they are all alike hell-deserving sinners. The covenant of works, as it used to be called, was made with our first parent. In him the race stood or fell germinally, and when he fell, "the guilt of their sin was imputed (so the Scotch Catechism words it), and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation."

Now the old Theology was not able to reconcile this contradiction between an imputation of original sin and the significance of life as a place of probation. No

rigorous thinker has ever attempted to throw a bridge over the abyss which rolls between these two contradictory statements of original sin and man's responsibility for the formation of character. The popular Theology has loosely held the two by oscillating between Arminian and Calvinist, one class of divines leaning to the Augustinian side and the other to the Pelagian. The schoolmen, as we have seen with Aquinas, boldly cut the knot by teaching a semi-Pelagian view of the Fall, in which human nature only lost what we may describe as its theological gifts or graces, which it recovers in baptism. But the Reformers, who swept this figment of baptismal grace with its *donum supernaturale* away, had to fall back on a theory of the positive as well as privative character of original sin, and so the dilemma started up afresh. Either we have to hold a strict theory of man's utter ruin, and then probation becomes an unmeaning term, or we must hold by the significance of life as a state of probation, and then we must admit to the full man's natural ability to do good and evil. As a matter of fact, this difficulty has never been bridged over, and never can be. Divines have had to stand on one side of the ravine or the other with an impassable gulf between. The first generation after the Reformers, with some exceptions, all took the view of man's utter ruin, and in this case with perfect consistency, little or nothing is said of life being a state of probation. But after the middle of the seventeenth century, and as the result of the Arminian controversy in Holland, a new departure was taken, and Theology began to employ the language of philosophy. Life was described as a state of probation, and long before the Deistic controversy had culminated and died down in the compromise to which Bishop Butler lent the authority of his great name, it

may be said that the old Augustinianism was as good as extinct even in orthodox circles.

As yet, as we have seen, no rational solution of this contradiction has been proposed by the old Theology; and we have now to ascertain whether the new Theology is able to solve the Sphinx riddle. The solution which we venture to offer is as follows. We should begin by discarding alike the two contradictory and naturally exclusive phrases of the imputation of Adam's guilt to his posterity, and of life being a state of probation. These are irreconcilable opposites; and since it is feeble to compromise them by alternately paring down the one in order to hold the other, we propose impartially to reject both, and to set up in their stead the expression which since Lessing's time has become current, of the education of the human race. We do not deny that this theory, like the other, is inadequate to all the facts of the case, since the education of the race is not carried on at present under the same favourable conditions as if Adam had stood in his original innocence. But even the phrase the Fall, which is not a scriptural term, but only an inference from certain Pauline reasonings on the headship of the two Adams, must not have more meaning forced into it than it can fairly bear. That which in one aspect was a fall on Adam's part, in another sense may be described as a rise. He was tested, it is true, and failed to meet the test; and so far his nature was impaired for himself and all his posterity. But, on the other hand, by his very disobedience he learned something. In a sense it was true, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Had he not asserted his self-will, and made the painful but wholesome discovery by which good comes out of evil, that his self-hood, which seemed so strong, was weak without grace, the deeper

lesson of submission to the divine will would never have been learned at all. There is a sense in which we must fall before we can rise. We must rebel and resist before we learn to submit. Every little child repeats Adam's transgression when it sets up its puny will against the command of its parent. Who has not watched the first struggles of a child, learning only by defeat which is the stronger of the two? We are half pleased at the arch look of defiance; and instead of taking it as a dangerous mark of infant depravity, we like our two-year-old darling all the more when it tries how "naughty" it can be. Is there not a deep undertone of satisfaction and motherly pride in the budding power of will, when the mother tells us how stubborn and like a bull calf her young boy has been, and how it has cried itself to sleep after its first battle for the mastery with its mother or nurse? In this there is a truer picture of our first father's transgression when in his spiritual infancy, than on that strange and distorted account of the Fall of the later Theology. Its theory of a probation undertaken for his posterity by our representative in the garden of Eden—its imputation of Adam's guilt to his innocent offspring, and lastly, its dark picture of hell opened wide, and heaven closed by man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, of which Milton sang, are all additions to the narrative. Later divines have gone on to pile up the horror by representing, as South did, Adam as a kind of miracle of foreknowledge, and able to forecast and calculate the consequences to himself and all his unborn posterity as he hung over the abyss which opened on the first taste of that forbidden fruit. It is not in the least surprising that Milton, who had reasoned out this federal Theology to its last conclusions, should in

later years have rejected it altogether, and in rejecting Augustinianism have ended in embracing Arianism. There was no *via media* open to him, as to us, between Deism and the old Theology, and so, unable to support the burden of the old Theology, he sank back into Deism.

This need not be the fate of the new Theology, to whom the education theory of the human race is now no novelty. The old probation theory, with its many inconsistencies and contradictions, was an attempt well-meant and true, as far as it went, to explain the deep significance of life. Anything was better than the despair which would settle over the soul if life was but a poor player, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. It is our last plank; and to save the cause of morality alike and religion, we must cling to the continuity of character in some shape or other. The eternal law, that as a man sows so he reaps, must be asserted at all hazards, and better a thousandfold the harshest form of the assertion than a dreary descent to some Oriental form of pessimistic Pantheism. We may demur to Dr. Pusey's extreme statement, that the fear of hell has filled heaven; but a doctrine of heavens and hells as articulate, even in its matter-of-fact minuteness, as that of Swedenborg, is infinitely better than this new sentimental Universalism, behind which lies a Pantheism in which all distinctions of character and all colours of good and evil are lost. For this reason much may be said to explain the growth of the old probation doctrine out of the union of Cartesian and Calvinist ideas. Indeed, were it not for the harshness with which it was held as a dogma by those who deny an intermediate state, and the possibility of any fresh discipline there, we might have passed it by as an archaic mode of expressing an important truth.

But the exigencies of modern controversy compel us to replace an expression inadequate to meet the better thoughts of our age with one which is. Probation, in the first place, is a term which, strictly speaking, applies to the testing of metals, but which is scarcely adequate to express our conception of the way in which the Divine Being elicits the eternal contrasts between good and evil. He may put a character to the test, as He is said to tempt Abraham. Even Christ Himself had to pass through the same ordeal at the time of His entering on the full consciousness of His Messiahship. It is only by passing a character through the fire that the dross can be separated from the true metal. In this sense probation is a condition of our reaching a higher stage of moral excellence; but we make a great mistake if we make the condition into the cause. Probation, strictly speaking, is only a part, not the whole of the discipline of life. It is a part precisely as examinations are an important part of school education, but only a part. The same relation that examinations at the end of school term bear to the daily teaching of classes, that our probation by God at certain crises of our being is to the whole discipline of life. Unfortunately for truth, the popular Theology has taken the part for the whole; a mere phase of our being here is taken for its entire orbit from birth to death. The discipline of life is a term both tender and true. It does not belie our conceptions of God as a Father. The God whom we adore does not bring beings into the world to mock them with a false sense of responsibility. He does not require of them a perfection impossible of attainment, because they enter life weighed down under the curse and condemnation of their first parent, which it is vain to hope they can escape the consequences of. To maintain at one moment the dogma

of an inherited curse and bondage to sin, and then to turn round and teach that men are placed here in a state of probation, this is one of those contradictions of dogma which shows that, in many cases, divines neither understand what they say nor whereof they affirm. It explains the use of dogma, which is not so much to assert what is true as to guard against what is supposed to be error. But divines forget that in the mystery of iniquity which sits in the temple of God the parent of all heresies is the lie for the truth; the false, because distorted account of God, as the austere man reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strewn.

Rejecting the phrase "probation," with the wrong associations which it connotes, let us turn to the other phrase, the education of mankind. We see, in the first place, how it fits in with our truest conceptions of the Fatherhood of God. From the birth to the training of a child there is but a single step. The parental instinct which is beforehand with us, and begins with our birth, grows also with our growth; strictly speaking, it never dies down, and the true parent never disinherits; he may let the prodigal go for a time, but it is from his home, not his heart, that he is banished. He will never give up the training of the child as long as there is any lesson which the parent can teach and the child can learn. Education has thus many stages, as George Herbert well puts it—

> "Lord, with what care Thou hast begirt us round!
> Parents first season us, then schoolmasters
> Deliver us to laws, they send us bound
> To rules of reason, holy monitors."

But the schoolmaster only takes the place of a parent, because he is in a sense the representative of an unseen

and spiritual parent. If the father of our flesh could teach as well as train us, could he instruct and also form our character under home influence which universal experience shows to be impossible, there would be no need for the teacher. But the schoolmaster, although often himself no more than a pedagogue, has to answer that purpose for which, according to the apostle, the law was given to Israel. The case of man is unlike that of other animals, to whom what we call nature or their environment, the struggle for existence with survival of the fittest, is their only discipline. In man, who has many schoolmasters besides the rough and ready discipline of life, the parental tie is strongest at the two extremes of life. The young will revere their parents for one reason, and the full-grown for another reason. Memory comes to replace hope, and gratitude supplies the missing link of infant dependence. It is only the freakish boy or girl, full of self-will and impatient to see life for themselves, who chafe at parental control. The young need the schoolmaster, because parental authority is a delicate tie; it is easily snapped, and hence is often strained too tight. The fond father, afraid of being thought indulgent, becomes harsh, and so falls into the very error he wishes to avoid. But although we commit our sons early to tutors and governors, and then send them out into the world to sink or swim for themselves, it cannot be said that true fatherhood ever dies down or disappears, as in the case of animals, with the instinct out of which it sprang. It is only changed into something higher. In nothing is man more distinctly a being made in the divine image than in this wondrous prolonging of the parental tie on into advanced years. In all other animals the *storgé* or parental instinct is soon replaced by indifference, and the parent bird would even kill its young which

refused to leave the nest. So of all other animals; but with man, as if to shadow forth one divine mystery, the Fatherhood of God, as marriage does another, our union with Christ, the tie of tenderness springs up afresh in middle age between parent and child to replace the merely selfish tie of dependence. As there is nothing so divine and so sacramental as marriage, since it symbolizes the union of Christ and His Church, so equally with marriage, and second to it only, if second, there is nothing so sacramental of God's eternal Fatherhood as the tenderness of a full-grown son or daughter for aged parents. In this case the tie of dependence is reversed, and instead of being snapped, as in the case of the lower world of animal life, in the spiritual world it springs up under reversed conditions. Our parents cherish us in childhood, and we cherish and fondle them in old age.

In all this there is a shadowing forth, a sacrament, as we should phrase it, of the Fatherhood of God, and of the education of the human family. The only objection to this theory is, of course, the painful fact that at present the vast majority of mankind know nothing of God as the Father of their spirits. They are not even dimly conscious of being under education to Him; scarcely even are they conscious of the "law as their schoolmaster." All this is true, but it only confirms what the parable of the younger, or prodigal son as we commonly call him, is intended to teach. God fulfils Himself in many ways. His purposes do not fail because our poor interpretation of facts does not come up to the good pleasure of His will, the great predestinating purpose of heading up all in Christ, or in the ages to come. His *βουλή, i.e.* His secret counsel, is not yet a *θέλημα* or the decree gone forth, which is to gather up all things in Christ. The two phrases

(Eph. i. 11), "good pleasure of His will," seem to suggest this contrast between a present revealed will and another still hidden. The fulness of time is not yet, and we have only to walk by faith at present, not by sight. For this reason we consider that there is only one key to the philosophy of history in the story of the two sons, the one the prodigal son of home life, the other of the far country. It is the education of the human race, with an increasing purpose running through it, which explains all history, although many of the chapters of that history seem to us "secular" and even "profane," and to have as little to say to the eternal purpose of God as the scuffling of kites and crows in the air, as Hume contemptuously described that which modern historians describe as the making of England. The early apologists, who laid stress on the *Preparatio Evangelii* in the rise of Greek philosophy, recognised that God was teaching the Gentiles by one law as He taught the Jews by another. They saw that there were two pedagogues, not one only. To Clement of Alexandria, Plato was "Moses Atticizing;" Sibyls were the Isaiahs of Rome, and inspired only in a lower degree. These are indications of a line of thought in which the early Church was in advance of the modern. They had not drawn the line as sharply as the Church, when she became ascendant and intolerant under Constantine, did between those within and those outside the pale of the covenant. God was the Father of all men, and gave gifts unto men, yea, even to the rebellious.

Would that we could return to this point of view, which is both deeper and simpler than the later dogma of probation! Then we should understand the true method of conducting missions to the heathen as only an educated minority see it.

The true missionary is one who, instead of beginning

at the wrong end and enlarging on the contrasts between Christendom and heathendom, should begin by seeking points of agreement. It is when the education of the human race deepens into a conviction that we learn to see points of unity in the human race never suspected before. There is a unity amid confusion alike of tongues and cults. Men are one even in proclaiming that they are not so. Nor do the bearings of this question end in time only. We have no reason to suppose, if God is educating the race in time, that He will not carry on this discipline perhaps under still more favourable conditions in the world of spirits. If we think of the untold myriads, doubtless the vast majority of the human race, who are cut off in infancy, and besides those who die babes in years, we think also of that still larger multitude which no man can number, who live and die as sheep, who in understanding, if not in malice, are children, what are we to say of all this? Dogma may cut us short with a peremptory command to keep silence. But the heart will not be so turned to stone and all pity petrified, and Niobe-like the conscience be hushed to its own maternal pleadings. There is some missing truth here wanting which leaves a blank in all our thinking on the hereafter. Formal Theology, in spite of many bold attempts, has not been able to supply the missing link on account of our ignorance of what the intermediate state may be.

But if we set out with the Fatherhood of God, and thence go on to hold His education of the race, there follows a connection between these two thoughts which is nowhere better expressed than in the conjunction of these two lines—

> "Thou wilt not leave him in the dust,
> And Thou hast made him, Thou art just."

We put these two together, and read them in the light of

the education theory thrown forward into the dim future, and which shines, we admit, only as far as shines a candle in the dark. Still we are not left without hope. In ways to us unintelligible at present, the Father of spirits may discipline spirits which sometime were disobedient. There are many classes in the school of Christ, and it is not necessary that all the children should be graded together and taught in the same class-room. It is enough for us to know that for all men who do not die in moral and spiritual infancy there is a certain discipline in this life, and that we are placed under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the Father. But how God will deal with others it is best for us to forbear to ask either the "how" or the "where." What shall this man do? is like the other question, Lord, are there few that shall be saved? a question which He is not pleased to answer; and where revelation does not draw back the veil, it is our wisdom also to set a watch on our mouth and keep the door of our lips. A solemn suspense of judgment on the whole question of the hereafter, and as to whether many, few, or all should be saved, is the true attitude of mind. Our only reason for breaking silence must be the rashness of the old school of dogmatists in their short-sighted zeal for what they call conversion to their views, or what they think is soul-saving truth. But for the assertion that life as we know it is our only state of probation, we would have preferred to have left the counter assertion of education here or hereafter in shadow. It is better far to break off on these questions at the point where Abraham exclaimed, Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? But the one misleading phrase "probation," coupled as it has been with that other ill-assorted dogma of hereditary guilt, make up such a mangle of our popular Theology, that like cross lights, so set as to pro-

duce darkness, they neutralize each other. The result is, that we are compelled to reconsider the whole question of the intention and purpose of God in the creation of man. Theologians have descanted far too much on the purpose of God in filling heaven with redeemed men who are to replace the ranks of fallen angels. The result is, that having invented the fall of angels, they go on to explain, in the same conjectural way, the exact meaning of the phrase the "fall" of man, when instead of being a "fall" at all, a phrase unknown to Scripture, it may have been the first step in the education of the race—an education such as we give our children when they learn to walk by falling, and to obey by refusing to obey. Instead of that favourite dogma of seventeenth century Theology, the covenant of works entered into with the first Adam, we incline to the view, that if Adam fell at all, as in a sense he did, the only result was that the heavenly Father undertook his education under severer discipline than he would have otherwise enforced. Adam was driven out of Paradise for wise and good reasons, lest, as we are told, he should eat of the tree of life and live for ever, implying, as we think, that a separate life without God would be hell in heaven. God at the same time "clothed" our first parents, which symbolizes much more than a mere covering of skins to their naked bodies, and so the education of the human race began, and is carried on to this day in sundry times and divers manners. An elective or partial dispensation, with the elder brother taken into covenant to the exclusion for the time being of the younger, is the mystery of the relation of Jew to Gentile in the Old Testament. It is reversed at present, when the Gentile is blessed to the exclusion of the Jew, but by and by God is said to have mercy on all.

So far the light of revelation helps us to see our way.

It is only as the darkness of Hades falls on us, with regard to those who perish out of Christ, that the light fails us. All we can do is to say that we cannot discard one theory because it does not clear up the mystery at once and account for all the contradictory facts of the case. Newton did not so reason when he sat down to write the *Principia*. As soon as he had struck out a theory which on approximation even seemed to explain the universe, he drew his lines like a general besieging a town. He sat down before the problem, and looked at it in this light or that, directly or obliquely, using only steady attention and that power of concentration which is genius in its highest form. Bishop Butler well described the mode of discovery, alike in Scripture as in science, as that of "thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance." We set out with the Fatherhood of God, and are led on naturally, and by easy steps, to the next stage of inference, in which we adore Him in a higher relationship in which the Son has revealed the Father. If He be our Father, then He must have some educational discipline in store for us. We wish we could say that this was the true meaning of what the old school Theology understood in describing life as a state of probation. There are two explanations, and only two possible, of the evils of existence. Either we hold with the whole Eastern type of thought, that existence is an evil, and consequently that life is a purgation or retribution for sins committed in a pre-existent state of being, or we hold with the entire West, that there is no pre-conscious sense of evil. We start fair at birth, and life is a preparation for a higher state of being. As for the troubles that we meet with and overcome in life, they are chastisements sent by our heavenly Father to disci-

pline us and to purge our spirits from the dross of fleshly-mindedness. These two theories of the East and the West cover the entire ground, and on the assumption of a moral purpose in life leave nothing to choose between them. We are compelled to take sides, and either accept the theory of life as a past or a present state of probation. Between the two it is needless to say that the latter is immeasurably the more self-consistent as well as simpler theory of the two. As we have no moral consciousness of our pre-existence, and of sins committed in that state, to say that we suffer here for sins committed there, is like punishing the wrong boy at school. Vicarious punishment is not easily reconciled at best with any conception of distributive justice; but what should we say of the judge who first gave the culprit to drink of the waters of Lethe, and then awoke him up in a new stage of being to undergo his punishment for which he had no sense of the desert? It is needless to say that the Buddhist theory of retribution here for wrong-doing elsewhere is so deeply immoral, that quite consistently those who hold it go on to pessimism. They lose faith in the moral order of the universe. The Being who afflicts them smites them for sins of which they are not conscious. It is but one step more to go on to hold that this Deity is reposing cross-legged on a bed of lotus leaves with eyes closed, hands folded, and that our heaven will be like his, a heaven of one long undreaming sleep.

From this Theology the whole West instinctively turns, and we can only ask ourselves with surprise, how it is conceivable that any thinkers could have turned to Buddhism as a better explanation of the ills of life than Christianity holds out? The only answer must be that the true explanation had been so distorted by the

dense medium, that it has passed through that at last, on the *corruptio optimi pessima* principle, even Buddhism was apprehended as something better and more merciful than Christianity so fearfully misapprehended. Even starlight is better than daylight, when, as is sometimes the case, the sun can only reach us through the thick blanket of a London fog.

We must remember that a distorted truth soon passes into an error, and when this is upheld in opposition to the lights of conscience, it soon becomes a lie. This is the meaning of Vinet's remark, that "even now, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, we may be involved in some tremendous error of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed." To say that men coming into the world, maimed in character, are yet wholly accountable for the formation of their character here, is to turn the truth of God into a lie. But for repeating this parrot phrase that life is a state of probation, the Divine Being would never have been described as an "austere man, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strewn." If, instead of "probation," men had spoken of life as a state of discipline or preparation for a higher state of being, in which in some cases the discipline is complete and in others only inchoate, we could only here say—

"Et sapit et mecum facit et Jove judicat æquo,"

this would be the education theory of the human race, which, ever since Lessing gave vogue to the phrase, "*Erziehung ist Offenbarung*," has been the keynote to the philosophy of history. In contrast to the Bossuet theory, if theory it deserves to be called which is only a modernized version of Augustine's *City of God*, Lessing taught that "what we call education in the

individual is revelation in the race." *Was die Erziehung bei dem einzelnen Menschen ist, ist die Offenbarung bei dem ganzen Menschen Geschlechte.* In a hundred short gnomes or pithy sayings Lessing works out this thought that education is revelation, and revelation education, and he ends by asking in the last of these pithy aids to thinkers, whether, "If we have lost our opportunities in time, is there not eternity lying before us?" *Ist nicht die ganze Ewigkeit mein?*

It is at this point that we call a halt. At this point of the vision Lessing in his preface compares himself to a traveller who has gone up a height to catch a glimpse of a glorious prospect seen in the light of a setting sun. "Much is lost in the haze of evening, but enough is seen to transport him with a sense of the vision of God; but," as Lessing adds, "he does not wish to call a single wayfarer out of his way to stand on that Pisgah height with him." There is to plain men a plain path of duty. They are labourers in life's vineyard, to receive each man, if called early or late, his penny a day. The equal Judge of all will do right with all. This is enough for the mass of mankind to know. But Theology has thought otherwise, and thus forced on thinkers to open their minds on the subject of the "larger hope." The ground, then, which we take up is that God's general Fatherhood implies a general dealing with the race as a whole, corresponding to what we call education in the individual. This is a view of universal history which history itself only partially confirms; and therefore we can only say with Lessing, "Beyond the veil; beyond the veil." If this is the phrase, not so much of philosophers as of prophets, we can only answer, that sometimes the prophet is the best philosopher. Even Bacon, least spiritual of men, had his Pisgah

glimpses of a coming age of discovery by the inductive method as soon as the old scholasticism had come to an end. This is all we ask for. If God is educating His elect, as we know is the case, may we not hope that He will also take in hand His younger born children? Is there not a deep meaning in that passionate cry of the father of the faithful, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee"? Who can say when and in what way that cry may be interpreted? All that we know of the hereafter is that it will present us with many strange surprises, for many that are last shall be first, and the first last. God has many children who are now regarded as outcasts. In the significant phrase of the Hebrew prophet, Lo-Ammi is to become Ammi, and Lo-Ruchamah to become Ruchamah. To all there is a testing time. In this sense we must speak of probation; and further, it certainly seems as if this life were the fittest testing time, when flesh and spirit meet, as it were, on common ground, for to all there is given the choice of Hercules. But seeing that some, either through dying in infancy or from other causes, are not tested at all, we can only then fall back on some larger hope, and feel sure that in spite of our systems God must bring His truth to bear on every conscience in some way or other, here or hereafter.

CHAPTER XIII.

INDIVIDUALISM.

ANOTHER of the contrasts between the Theology of the past and the future lies in the point of Individualism. This is the last word of the old Theology; but so far from being the last word of the new, it is only a means to an end, the starting-point to a higher collectivism. What is the relation of the Church to the world? This is a question which all forms of Christianity alike must face. The controversy is by no means new, or the solution which we offer in the least original. At the same time it must be said that the old Theology, which as much before the Reformation as since taught Individualism, has never clearly pointed out how this Individualism, which is the result of conversion and separation from the world, is to lead up to a new Collectivism. The necessity for some change out of a condition or state which we call the world to the other condition known as the Church, through regeneration, has been affirmed in some sense by all sects of Christians; but while this contrast between the Church and the world is admitted in terms, Theology has almost invariably failed to point out what relations might exist beween the Church and the world, and to describe the way in which the Church should act on the world, until in a

sense it has succeeded in leavening life and society to its standards of duty.

Let us begin by defining Individualism, and in the first stage point out what is its true side. Individualism is an important aspect of that truth of conversion which, but for the old Theology, we should never have learned at all. That aspect of Individualism is this, that any living soul which has come to know God as the living God is by this act of affiance (the soul's espousal, as we may call it) at once raised into a new plane of thought. It is advanced in spiritual dignity—it no longer belongs exclusively to the lower world of nature. So much is this the case, that it is able to say all things have become new—old things have, as it were, passed away. Any lower view of conversion than this is a mere watering down of the doctrine on the part of divines to whom this truth is unpalatable, or out of the range of their experience. To do divines of the Catholic school justice, they see this almost, if not quite, in the same light. Conversion, as distinct from an external regeneration or baptism, is by no means the specialty of Protestantism that many assume it to be. We may measure, indeed, how much the age of the Deists had lost its sense of primitive truth when Wesley had to proclaim the doctrine of the new birth as a kind of alarm to the unconverted, the very meaning of which had been lost to the age. The doctrine was thus given a pre-eminence by Wesley's preaching which it has happily never since lost. But in all essential particulars it was the same truth which has been held by the Church universal from the beginning.

That truth is, that each soul on its second birth is brought into a fresh and living relation with God, such as it never had before; it is given, in a word, an

individuality by which it is separated from the crowd of common men. It is made in the full sense of the term a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. It has seemed to many Christians so essential to mark this out as the true baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, that they have declined to use the baptism of water at all in the case of unconscious infants. Not to enter on the well-worn track of the Pædobaptist controversy, it seems to some a mistake to baptize with water until we are conscious that the higher or fire baptism of the Holy Ghost has been given. But strictly speaking there are three baptisms, and so far from all three being synchronous, two are entirely divided by a space of time, and analogy would point to the same interval in the case of the third. The three are the baptism of water, of fire, and of blood. The last is the bath of final suffering, whether active or passive, which all, or at least the great majority, pass through, and that only at the very end of their lives. This baptism of blood is clearly distinguished in time from the second, or baptism of fire, and by parity of reasoning we should say that the first baptism of water may be applied to the unconscious infant, as the last baptism by blood is to the scarcely conscious saint, who, in dying, seals his testimony with his blood. The first is pre-conscious, and the third post-conscious: it is only the second of the three in which the subject can be said to be fully conscious. For this reason we strongly incline to the Pædobaptist side in the discussion, holding at the same time, as we do, that so far from the second or higher baptism of fire attending on the ordinance of water baptism, it is wanting from the nature of the case. An infant is as incapable of being the subject of the baptism of fire as it is of the baptism of blood. In grace as in

nature, everything is in its own order, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. First the dedication by water—symbol of the first, and partial separation from the world; then the dedication or baptism by fire—symbol of a still deeper separation from the world; and lastly, the baptism of blood—symbol of the final and complete separation from the world.

Individualism, then, or separation from the world by the giving of a new name, is a truth which has never been lost to the Christian Church. In an age of formalism it has fallen into the background, but at each revival of religion it has sprung again into its old importance. Indeed, the chief use of revivals in the Church has been to emphasize this truth, as often as it has degenerated into a kind of truism, by men taking for granted that all baptized Christians are believers, and all professors are in deed and in truth followers of the crucified and risen Saviour. The old Theology has held Individualism quite as emphatically as the new would desire to teach it. What correction or addition do we then wish to attach to the term?

Vinet, to whom we owe more than to any other writer on the distinction between Individualism and Multitudinism, has succeeded, by a distinction which is merely verbal, in pointing out what is the use and what the abuse of Individualism. The use he calls Individuality, and the abuse Individualism. The difference seems a mere word-quibble; and yet there is an important point in the distinction which the history of later Protestantism has made only too apparent. There is no good without its attendant evil, no use without its abuse. So it is with the thought that the soul which receives Christ is separated from the world and joined to the Church, which is the body of Christ. When men held this

truth in all its intensity, as they did during the Middle Ages, the result was that it cut society into two unnatural extremes. There were ascetics who lived only in and for the New Jerusalem, and whose last word was *de imitatione Christi*, and *de contemptu omnium vanitatum mundi.* When the world was thus given over to Satan, those who were lacking in the spiritual passion, and who could not abandon the world, were supposed to be peculiarly in danger of the assaults of the evil one. This delusion, which lay at the foundation of demonology and witchcraft, once it found acceptance, soon gathered around it phenomena taken from facts to confirm it. Men, as in the Faustus legend, were actually supposed to make pacts with Satan, and the result was a contrast between the New Jerusalem and the evils of the present world, such as the old monk Bernard of Morlaix has depicted in his melancholy but exquisite hymn, fragments of which have stolen into our modern hymnals.

"The world is very evil," but it is no light danger to set up such an unconscious semi-Manichæism as this. It makes the meat it feeds upon. It begins by exaggerating the contrast between the Church and the world, and ends by effacing it; the world has been smitten as if with the tail of the great red dragon, and hence it is drawn through fear to rush blindly into the Church. So in this way the monastic system broke down during the dark ages beneath its own incubus of the fear of hell. The world became one vast monastery, the end of which, of course, was that at last the monastery became the world over again.

Individualism, in this way pressed too far, invariably reacts on itself. A similar reaction has set in in our day, when Puritanism, pushed to its extreme, as in the New England type, has brought with it a recoil quite as marked as that of the Renascence. Two centuries ago, in conse-

quence of the unwise attempt of the Stuarts to give a festive character to the day of rest, and to enforce this Darius-like decree by a Book of Sports, a reaction arose in favour of a Jewish Sabbath, the last traces of which are only dying out in our day. Sabbatarianism, as it deserved to be called, is a phase of thought peculiar to the English and Scotch Reformation, but unknown in Germany and Switzerland. This cannot be owing to the influence of Calvin, seeing that the authority of this great Reformer was nowhere greater than in Switzerland, where, on the whole, Sabbatarianism has never prevailed. We must look elsewhere for the cause, nor is it far to seek.

The true cause was political. The Laudian party had staked their authority on one view of the question, so the Puritans took, as we might expect they would, the opposite. They pushed their hostility to the prelatist view of the Lord's-day rest into the opposite extreme. They actually distorted their conceptions of pleasure and pain. All pleasure became sinful, solely because it was pleasure. As Macaulay crisply puts it: "Bearbaiting became a sin, not because it gave the bear pain, but because it gave the spectators pleasure." All stage plays were condemned, not because, as was too often the case, the plays themselves were lewd and demoralizing, but as if all spectacular effect, all dramatic art and illusion, were sinful *per se*. The result was the same, as we have seen, with the monkery which taught that the world was very evil. The world took these men at their word, and became as bad as they were reported to be. It was as with the publicans in the times of Christ, because morally outcast they bettered the instruction that was given them, and behaved as the ceremonial Jews supposed they would behave. When eccentric old women were supposed to be bewitched, any old woman who felt the

eccentricities of age creep on her began to act as if she were a subject of Satan, and when accused of this horrible form of possession, did not take the pains to deny the charge. So the delusion spread, as myths do when the idea begins to take shape in fact, and each fresh fact lends strength to the original myth.

Such are a few of the evils of Individualism, or the strained contrast between the secular and the spiritual. It begins by separating the two, and out of the separation there grows a perilous confusion; since, in fact, the Church and the world, the sacred and the secular, never can be long forcibly separated in our present mixed state of being. Nor was this the only evil; the second and more dangerous form of this contrast we have now to describe. Individualism in its Protestant and Puritan type throws the idea of the collective type of redeemed humanity entirely into the background, or rather it postpones it altogether to what it calls the millennial age of the world. In this dispensation the Church and the world are opposed, or at best doubtful allies, since in most cases the State either oppresses the Church or is oppressed by it. All hopes of any alliance, or any rational term of live-and-let-live, seems to be out of the question, and men are either extreme separatists, or if they are in favour of the union, they only consent to it on what are known as Erastian grounds.

This is a melancholy state of things, and only leads to loss and confusion on both sides. We do not see the remedy at present, and do not even attempt to point out in what direction it lies. But we fail to see why Individualism should efface the thought of a redeemed humanity. We hold that the effacement of the other, or good side of Multitudinism, leads to that miserable half truth or compromise in which one error is brought in to counteract

another. What is known as the Catholic reaction is only an attempt to bring in the lost or half-forgotten truth of a redeemed humanity, or in a back-door kind of way. Writers like Mr. Baring Gould and others of this type, of which there are not a few, gird at what they describe as Protestantism, and set up a Catholic ideal, as they call it, of Christianity in its stead. In many cases they mean by this only what we should call a broader, freer conception of God's work in the world, than that which the ordinary Bible Christian will allow of. They crave for a sacramental view of life and religion, and by that they mean the liberty, not only to use symbolism in worship, but also to call in art as an auxiliary teacher of truth, subordinate to, if not side by side with, the written word.

How are we to meet this Neo-Catholic reaction? How are we to reply to it? The mere negations of traditional Protestantism are simply powerless against it: the spread of Ritualism, in as far as it has been opposed and prosecuted by the Protestant party, should teach us a wholesome lesson. The true antidote to error is to draw out the precious from the vile, and to point out what is the one-sided element in the old Theology.

This is the Individualism we have been pointing at. Any Theology which begins and ends with a soul-saving system has no place for art, and no love for symbolism, and no need for the sacramentalism of nature, which sees no sermons in stones, no tongues in the trees, no books in the running brooks, and good in everything; that type of religion is stricken with sterility. It must move on to some higher plane, if it is not to be overtaken and swept away by the demand for symbolism of an art-loving age. The remarkable growth and spread of Irvingism and Swedenborgianism, which are both protests in their way against the hard doctrinal Protestantism of the past, is

too significant not to be noted as one of the signs of the times. Differing, as they do, widely from each other in details, they have this note in common, that they both protest against the dry and hard notional religion of the past as deduced out of certain phrases of the Pauline Epistles. The one is an anti-Lutheran protest and the other an anti-Calvinist, but both draw their strength from this protest, and gather recruits from the ranks of the old Protestant party. What makes their protest all the more significant is that disagreeing, as they do, in details, they both agree in laying down as the reason for their claim Church principles as opposed to Individualism. That a ritualistic and symbol-loving system, which strikes the looker-on as Aaronism revived, should have grown out of the Scotch Kirk seems more like a freak of passionate protest than the calm and coherent evolution of one serious type of religious thought out of another. Milton's scorn of scorn for "deformed and fantastic dresses, palls and mitres, gold and gewgaws, filched from Aaron's old wardrobe or the Flamens' vestry," has been a tradition of popular Protestantism ever since. What would he have thought if in the very seat and citadel of Protestantism a new type of worship had sprung up, which not only went as far as Anglican symbolism, but even overpassed it. But this is Irvingism, and that it has had any success, however partial, can only be accounted for on the ground of intuitional Theology, that it meets certain spiritual instincts which our doctrinal Protestantism has, to its own hurt and loss, passed over.

The same is true of the system which calls itself by the name of Swedenborg. That a Church and not a school of philosophy should have called itself by the name of Emanuel Swedenborg is one of the strangest vagaries of the human mind. He was a philosopher,

who from a scientist passed on into a seer, and so by a kind of *salto mortale* sprang at a bound from the sensible world of things we can measure and weigh, to the super-sensual world of things to be known only by the touch of the inner sense. Whether Swedenborg was mad is the same question as whether Hamlet was mad, and we can only say, as in the latter case, we must have some inner knowledge of madness ourselves to give an opinion on such a subject. But the strange part of the story is, that his followers have agreed to found, not a new school of philosophy, but a new Church, on assent to his teachings. The year 1759 is fixed as the exact date of this New Jerusalem coming down from heaven. The lesson of all this is the same as we have seen in the case of Irvingism. There must be some widely-felt craving for collective or Church life which our popular Protestantism, based as it is on Individualism, fails to recognise. A man is converted, for instance, by an itinerant Methodist preacher, he "gets good," as he calls it in his own phrase, from the sermon, and he forthwith joins the sect where sermons of this kind are preached. He then takes a pew in the chapel, fits it up with a cushion, if his means allow of it, he buys a hymn-book, and so is set up in his little stock-in-trade in religion. We shall be told this is only a caricature of the religion of the lower middle class in our times. Those who know it best will not deny that it has some points of resemblance, and consequently will not resent our account of the way in which some of our popular preachers fill their chapels, not by deepening the thoughts of their people, but only by dinning into them the old aspects of our popular Theology. The late Alexander Knox, who was said to have been the bridge in the Oxford movement between Wesley and Pusey, had noticed this more than seventy years ago.

When he lived and wrote those memorable letters which are theological treatises in all but name, Individualism was at its height. What are now known as Church principles did not even exist, and Oxford, as in Pope's line, "*Alma Mater* lies dissolved in port," had not a suspicion of what was coming to it.

Reactions take such sudden and strange twists, that the surprise of the old orthodox party was great to find themselves called to embrace, first the old Anglican standpoint, and then when driven from that to accept the position of Rome. This Anglican movement has run its course, and the most intellectual minds, like the author of *John Inglesant* and Mozley in his *Recollections of Oxford*, now confess themselves disillusioned. But the cause of this sporadic outbreak of Church principles among English sects and Oxford dogmatic divines, and even in the Scotch Kirk, must have some general cause deeper than the formulas of any particular Church. When milk or water is tainted, the educated sanitarist now goes to work and tracks the mischief home to some particular dairy or well, where the poison germ has found its nidus. We must do the same in Theology. When we do this, we shall find that our popular Protestantism has laid stress on one truth at the expense of another. That missing truth is the "Church of humanity," and so we see, as Vinet the great teacher of Individualism pointed out, that what we call Individualism or personal religion is not an end in itself, but only the means to a higher end.

That higher end is a new Collectivism, which we may call the Church of the future. A Theology of the future must look to a Church of the future, as a Theology of the past naturally enough looks to a Church of the past. The new Collectivism, unlike the Catholic Church of

antiquity, will not rally itself behind a bulwark of creeds of which a hierarchy are supposed to keep the key. This has been the weak point in this Neo-Catholicism, whether we call it Anglican, or Irvingite, or the Church of the New Jerusalem. Apostolical orders, as they are called, or even the revival of the apostolate itself, as the followers of Irving pretend, will not meet the wants of the age. The Church of the future must be comprehensive, and for this reason must not articulate dogma too far, much less should it play the contemptible part of poor relation to the Church of Rome, and ape its hierarchical claims without being able to show that it stands on the historical ground for doing so. The Anglican claim for an autonomous Church, which was never in bondage, at least *de jure*, either to the papal or royal supremacy, and which is supposed to have come down to our day with a life of its own, like the "milk-white hind" of Dryden, this is a fiction so startling that we must lay all historical criticism on the shelf before we can believe it. It is as widely improbable as the Munchausen story of the man at the river-bank, between a tiger and a crocodile, who escaped them both by ducking his head, and so leaving those two tyrants of the land and deep to devour each other. We can smile at the simplicity of those who make history in this way, but the secular world will take its version of English history from the Froudes, and Gardiners, and Macaulays of secular life, not from the uncritical compilations of the Oxford school of divines.

The Church of the future must be left, we admit, for the future to shape. For us to lay down the lines on which it is to be built up, would be to act as these Anglican, Irvingite, and New Jerusalem Churches are doing, and to repeat their dogmatism without its excuse.

We may be sure of this, that all our existing Churches are too stiff and narrow; they are old wine-skins, and would burst with the new wine of the kingdom. All we desire to lay stress on is the present distress for want of a true Collectivism, deserving the name of a universal Church. The boldest pretenders, for this reason, sometimes succeed, as he who "peppers the highest pleases the most." The Church of Rome has gained not a few recruits in our day, on the plea of its breadth and comprehension. "From the rising of the sun," they say, by a strange twist of a text in Malachi, "to the going down thereof," the same sacrifice of the Mass is put up in the same Latin tongue. It is *omne ignotum*, it is true alike in East and West, from India to Indiana, but this *ignotum* is *pro magnifico*. Anglicans at a long interval put up the same plea of Pan-Anglicanism, and we have even heard of a Pan-Presbyterian Council of the same sort. These œcumenical windbags, swollen with their own emptiness, scarcely need a prick from the pen of ridicule to let the wind out of them. They contract as they inflate by the force of that very Individualism against which they seem to protest. The most Protestant thing a man can do, it has been said, is to join the Church of Rome, as some do, and then come back again a sadder and wiser man. The very renunciation of the right of private judgment is not done without a supreme act of private judgment. It is the same along the whole line. The most sectarian people in the world are those who are always ringing the changes as to Catholic consent and the voice of antiquity. This voice is like the Killarney echo, that always answers back what it is asked, only with a clipped note, the first syllable is muffled, and the second only distinct.

For this reason we do not suppose that Individualism

will disappear under any of the three protests against it, which base themselves on a revival of antiquity. The dead past is not to be called up, as the witch of Endor called up Samuel, in this way. We must look elsewhere than in a fantastic revival of Church life for the new Collectivism. Positivism, again, with its Church of humanity, is a strange and sickly dream of the future. It has caught one or two of the signs of the near future, but it has missed the most essential. It is right in its attempt to rally to it all that is good and great in the past, and its Church calendar, with such saints as Confucius, Zoroaster, Mahomet, and Moses, all grouped together, seems like a dream of a half-insane man of genius, from which more is to be learned than from the sober thoughts of more commonplace men. The age has a dream of the universal religion, some call it the absolute, which is to be an amalgam of all the old faiths. Comparative religion has become a favourite study during the last few years in America, and for this reason it is partly a reaction from, and partly the outcome of, the Transcendental philosophy of New England. The very descendants of the hard school of New England Theology had lost faith in the old Calvinism, and also even in the new Unitarianism which was its outcome, and at last drifted on, as Emerson did, into a kind of half poetical Pantheism, in which the Church of humanity was to become the Church of the future. This falls in well enough with the Comtist ideal, and so we have in two instances of ultra-idealism and ultra-materialism, Pantheists and Positivists coming together on the common ground of founding a Church, and not merely a sect or school of philosophy.

These phenomena are all too remarkable to be passed over as merely accidental. When on all sides men are

seeking some Church of the future, it must have some explanation in a spiritual craving which our popular Theology fails to satisfy. We infer the same as apologists do, that the expectation of a Messiah marks the time when the Messiah actually appeared. Men looked for the coming One, because He was to come at that time. The subjective expectation and the objective fulfilment of that desire of all nations is not accidental. We reason in the same way with regard to the Church of the future. All these Church theories, from the Papacy to Positivism, up and down the whole gamut of belief, must have some meaning, unless we are to live with the dry and dull school of divines who, like the Bourbons, learn nothing and forget nothing. Protestantism, like Catholicism, has a grand past; but the future is not with this or any form of Individualism. The reason is that which Vinet pointed out in his contrast between Individuality and Individualism. "They are," he says, "two sworn enemies; the first being the obstacle and negation of all society, the second that to which society owes all it possesses of divine life and reality. Nowhere does Individualism prosper more easily than where there is an absence of individuality; and there is no more atomistic policy than that of pure despotism."

What Vinet means by this contrast, which is more than verbal, is this, that individuality is the spring of all character, and hence of all energy for good. But this spring soon runs down, or under summer heats is dried up in us. Some one has said, "We are born originals, and die copies." This is the sting of the French epigram, "Born a man, died a grocer." This is that liberty, in other words, to form our character which is our native birthright, and which none should filch

from us. Unfortunately this is too often parted with, and the loss of it passes into a selfish submission to the collective will, which is the Individualism in which all seek their own. Egotism is the bane of each man's existence, unless resisted and overcome; and so we sink, and become at last, as a whole, a nation of shopkeepers. So our very virtues pass into vices. Thrift and industry become merely forms of money-grabbing, and in the last extreme of all, public spirit has so died out, that we should be ready to accept a Cæsar if he were rich enough to buy us all up with the suitable bribe in a society where every man has his price.

This type of Individualism in Theology turns into a snug, middle-class, soul-saving system. To get to heaven with our wife and children, and perhaps cousins and collaterals, as far as the legacy tables go, this is as far as some people can see into God's purpose in sending His Son into the world. The Jews, or at least those who happen to be alive at that day, are to be converted during the millennium, and out of this a great blessing is to flow to the mass of the heathen. But here their simple hopes of heaven end. It is not much better than the Indian's heaven, where his faithful dog shall bear him company. Such is Individualism here and hereafter. To sit on a damp cloud, playing a harp, may be only a caricature of the popular heaven. But the conventicle view of Isaac Watt's hymns, "where congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths never end," shows how poor and thin the conception became of that place, where at God's right hand there are pleasures evermore. In this Christians fell below Jews. Is it surprising that we revolt against this half-monkish, half-Puritan type of Individualism, and that the age will have none of it? It is the poor

and etiolated type of Pietism, which explains both Broad and High Church attempts to get hold of some Collectivism of the future Church of humanity, and of a unity worthy to be called His body, who is the Head of redeemed humanity.

We do not for our part attempt to draw on the future, and depict what society will become, when the Church and the world, instead of contrasted as at present, shall only be different aspects of the same idea of redeemed humanity. We have no Pisgah height to climb to, and behold the land which is still very far off. But we are sure of this, that as our heaven will be something much more than a repetition of earth, so the Church of the future will be something more than a reproduction on a large scale of any of our existing communities. In this respect we see how it is that Individualism fails to grasp the conception of a Church of the future, which shall embrace the whole of humanity. What the hereafter may unfold it is impossible to say, but we know that heaven will be a state as much above our present consciousness as the life of a grown man is beyond that of a babe in its cradle. We have been introduced by Hartmann and others into what they describe as the philosophy of the pre-conscious. It is possible that we shall go on to a Theology of the post-conscious. Who can say how far our present feelings may be sublimated, so that consciousness in the resurrection body will no longer be the same complex action of mind on matter, the reflex of sensation stirring in the sensorium, which is the condition of its exercise at present?

There has been a childish taking for granted that life in heaven will be little more than a continuation of what our life on earth has been. There is a class

of American writers among whom this thought of heaven being a continuation of earth has taken the form of a coarse and familiar way of describing the glories of the unseen world. Writers like the author of the "Gates ajar" seem to have solved the problem of existence after death very much to their own satisfaction. It is true that they have long since discarded the dreary conception that heaven is a kind of latter-day tabernacle, in which the worthy Dr. Watts is for ever preaching long sermons and singing divine and moral songs. Let us be thankful for this deliverance at least. But when we ask what is the heaven that we are to be introduced to instead of the old, the answer is disappointing in the extreme. As far as we can judge, it consists of New England homes, in which the sweetness and light of modern culture is supposed to compensate for the old Puritanism which, if severe, was at least grand. The writer of "A Little Pilgrim," Mrs. Oliphant, has also attempted to picture what the after-death scene is to be, and while the sentiment is gracious and womanly, we are by no means sure that it is not quite as wide of the mark as Defoe's satirical account of the apparition of the worthy Mrs. Veal of Margate, who came to give an account of herself, and to recommend a dull book, known as *Drelincourt on Death*, as the most authentic account of the unknown world.

Individualism, in a word, is responsible for much of this semi-materialism in connection with the other shore. By a strange conversion, Swedenborg, the mystic and spiritualist, when he turned seer, saw heavens, hells, and intermediate states as minute and particular as the visions of Dante. He went even beyond Dante, since he saw not only the same men and women whom we meet with in this life, but also he placed them, as Dante

certainly did, not in a situation and with surroundings such as we are familiar with on earth. When we are told of spiritual rocks and rivers and mountains in a spiritual heaven, our understanding is unable to follow Swedenborg into that inner world of allegory, or to figure to itself what a spiritual rock or river can mean. Hence we are brought to a standstill on the whole subject of the hereafter, and prefer to stand without the veil in an attitude of reverent waiting, and to content ourselves with the language of the apostle, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." We are content here to leave the question of Individualism and of our separate existence after death. We know what personality here is,

> "Since though the frame that binds us in
> Our isolation grows defined—
> Such use there is in blood and breath,
> Which else were fruitless of their due;
> Had man to learn himself anew,
> Beyond the second birth of death."

The poet, who is also a philosopher, has here struck the right note. He has carried Individualism to the last point, where we may leave it. We gain the sense of personality through the body, and presume we shall not lose this when we leave the body, and begin existence under new conditions. But this existence will certainly be a collective one, in a sense not to be explained by any forms of corporate life existing here either in Church or State. The white rose of Paradise which Dante saw in vision is, on the whole, the truest conception, perhaps, of the way in which our present Individualism will be lost in a higher Collectivism—

> "In fashion, then, as of a snow-white rose,
> Displayed itself to me the saintly host,
> Whom Christ in His own blood has made His bride."

This brings us to the point where we lose ourselves in light. Our restless self-hood, with its ravenous desires, its wanton wishes, and its will, tormented between these two tides of the lower life, and chafed alternately by both winds and waves, shall then be at rest. It will be the rest of rapt contemplation, like the motion of a planet in its orbit, singing as it shines, and at rest because in perfect balance. It will be at once society and solitude; a city with a garden in the midst of the city, instead of a park or Paradise planted outside the city, teaching us this, that the central part of the second Paradise of the redeemed is a solitude, and that it has society on the circuit of its walls. At present we go outside the city into the park to be alone: then we shall go through the city to reach the garden, in whose midst is the river of God, clear as crystal. What a striking symbol this is of the highest ends of man, and of his blessed destiny, when we shall hold converse with others, and then carry that converse to the central region of all, where the river of God proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb! This is heaven, truly consummated in the twofold bliss of a collective and individual life, not as at present, when we rise from the individual to the collective, but when we pass from the collective to the individual; since in Thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

CHAPTER XIV.

ESCHATOLOGY.

ESCHATOLOGY is the last and perhaps the gravest point of contrast between the old Theology and the new. It is a subject so beset with difficulty on account of its touching on the unknown future, concerning which we are all alike so much in the dark, that to correct the old Theology, seems as presumptuous as for the blind to lead the blind. It is a case where both are likely to fall into the ditch, and perhaps it would be wisdom on all sides to stand and wait. The day will reveal it. For our part, this is the position we are disposed to take up; and if any one, discarding all dogma, will say, from the honest inquirer's point of view, that they are content to leave the subject in shadow, sure that the Judge of all the earth will do right, no one will rejoice more than we do at this interim position.

But it is useless to shut our eyes to the fact that the old Theology of both Confessions, Reformed and Unreformed, alike has assumed the necessity for very definite teaching on the subject of heaven, hell, and an intermediate state. It has also held unwaveringly that any Theology deserving the name of dogmatic, or even definite, must lay a firm foundation for itself in the fixed belief of mankind, in the finality of probation in this life, and the eternal state of happiness or misery awaiting us after death.

In his reply to Dr. Farrar, the late Dr. Pusey admits that this is his starting-point, and lays stress on an expression of Faber's, that the "fear of hell has filled heaven." We do not care to enter at this early stage on the discussion as to the place of fear in a code of ethics whose keynote is love. In so far, no doubt, as repentance and faith are of the subsoil of the soul, which must be turned up before love will grow at all, we may say, that fear is an intrinsic part of the gospel scheme as a whole. A certain element of fear springing from enlightened self-love is not only admissible, but further, we do not see how the good news of God could pierce the hard crust of resistance, and make a lodgment in corrupt selfish natures such as ours, unless it began with motives of self-interest. Disinterested morality must take its rise in that which is interested. The prudential must precede the moral, and the moral so leads up to the spiritual, as Coleridge wisely pointed out in his *Aids to Reflection.*

So far well; and we have no wish, for our part, to cut away either fears of hell in hopes of heaven from the popular Theology. The failure of the Neo-Platonists should warn us not to attempt to inculcate disinterested morality by doing as Hypatia did, who went through the streets of Alexandria with a torch in one hand and a pitcher in the other, symbols of her wish to burn heaven and quench the fires of hell, that man might love virtue for its own sake. All religions, in the common opinion of mankind, have their sanction in a system of future rewards and punishments; and if Christianity does not lay the same stress on this appeal to self-interest, it cannot be said that it passes it over altogether. At the same time, it must be admitted that as the governmental view of God and the eudæmonist scheme of ethics have

disappeared with the age of Deism, as a result of this a change has also come over the Christian consciousness on the subject of the hereafter, and in view of this change the old Theology, with its clear-cut lines and menacing dogmas, has become simply indefensible to those who hold that a spiritual philosophy must lead up to a spiritual Theology.

The question then occurs, what we are to put in its place. It is certain that the old dogmas have lost their force, and the age is in that miserable state of indecision unable to shake off some of the old terrorism, and yet with no fresh and deep-cut convictions to put in their place. The result of this state of half-belief is simply deplorable. Dr. Pusey, in his reply to Dr. Farrar, describes the "four last things as death, judgment, heaven, hell, which were subjects of daily meditation, but are so no longer." "Faber," he adds, "says in his glowing way: We cannot doubt but that hell has sent into heaven more than half as many souls as it contains itself. Such sayings would scare us for not having preached it more, but that one hopes that God's Holy Spirit has repeated our Lord's words, and the faith of the Church within to hearts to whom we have not spoken His truth."

But this is a strange inconsistency on the part of divines of the old school, for which there must be some reason, if not excuse. Dr. Pusey ingenuously admits, as too many do, that they practise a kind of reserve on this subject, and only hint of hell to ears trained to the right theological ring. But surely this is not to deal fairly with truth. "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God," is the apostle's record of his ministry, and the same should be our rule of action. "He that hath the word of the Lord, let him speak it."

Clearly, then, to hold this doctrine as a tradition, a deposit of the Theology of the past, and yet to hold it back or not proclaim it from the pulpit, is worse than cowardice. It is to incur the guilt of not being clear from the blood of all men. The explanation of this contradiction between the muffled tones of the modern pulpit and the plain language of the old dogmatic confessions, is that this is a doctrine held regulatively, as the late Dean Mansel taught the clergy to hold their Theology, carrying out in this a Kantian distinction between absolute and regulative truth very much farther than Kant himself would have approved of. This distinction of regulative truths in Theology, which might have come from the Parent of lies, has, like all two-handed weapons, recoiled with dangerous effect on those who used it. It has been made the point of departure of an Agnosticism leading on to Atheism. Nor is it strange when divines, setting out with the old contrasts between natural and revealed Theology, go on to teach of two aspects of the Deity. They tell us of a God in Christ whom they wish to drive men to, and of a God out of Christ who is such an object of unreasoning terror that in the end He is not believed in at all. When we analyze this religion of terrorism and trace it to its source, we find it springs from the crude opinion that God's attributes of justice and mercy may be and are separable, because, as a matter of experience, men learn to fear the wrath of God before they taste His love. Hence we rashly presume to cut the character of God in two, and distribute Him as if what was separable in our experience were separable in His Being, and as if to one class there was dispensed mercy without justice, and to another class justice without mercy.

That such crude representations of the Divine Being

should actually foster Atheism, which it vainly tries to crush and confute by argument, is only too apparent in our day. It has been said without contradiction that the old Theology teachings on the subject of doctrines of heaven and hell have caused more infidelity than all the other dogmas of divines put together. With curious inconsistency, Dr. Pusey turns round on those who take him at his word, and claims that there is a salutary use in this doctrine. It is the fear of hell, as he tells us, which fills heaven. But for this background of fear, he assures us, there would not be the foreground of joy and hope. It is clear from his use of this argument that he cannot get rid of the opinion that in the case of the majority of mankind he must act on some mercenary motive of this kind, and that men only believe in God and serve Him through hope of reward and fear of punishment. The result of this is that this slavish view of man in its turn reacts on our conception of God Himself, since God, who is the author of our motives, must be Himself mercenary. He could have no adequate motive for sending His Son into the world, unless, arising out of some pre-existing necessity, there were an eternity of suffering awaiting all souls which had sinned in Adam, unless delivered from this sentence by the ransom price paid by Christ on the cross.

In the old Theology there was thus a severe consistency throughout. It hangs all together, and the result is that if criticism has pierced it in one direction, it becomes powerless either for attack or defence in every other. That criticism has pointed out the defect of the old forensic doctrine of the Atonement, and so pierced the old Theology in its vital part, no one now doubts. That all souls are naturally and necessarily immortal and destined to live, if not in an endless happiness, then in a

condition of endless misery, this is that postulate of the old Theology which has been demolished *ex abundanti* by writers too numerous to name. It rests on certain texts of the Old Testament uncritically applied. It is like thrice slaying the slain to show that certain proof texts in Genesis as to man being made a living soul, teach if anything the direct opposite to the Cartesian dogma of a dualism of mortal body and immortal soul on which the popular Theology rests. Man was created mortal, but with a capacity for becoming immortal by tasting, or rather by feeding on, the tree of life. But when he made the fatal mistake, typical of that which all his posterity do, and chose the tree of knowledge before that of life, or, in other words, preferred, as we all do, his sensual to his spiritual life, he was driven out of the garden lest he should take of the tree of life, and so add sin to sin, and by becoming spiritual, become capable of spiritual wickedness, and sin as the angels. He chose the animal part of his nature, and taking the narrative by itself, we should say, he passed under a sentence of eternal death on the day he sinned, so that dying he should die. Hence it is written that the first Adam was made a living soul (Nephesh Chayah), a phrase applied to all animals alike. It is only the second Adam who is a quickening spirit.

As to the phrase "Annihilationism," it is a misleading one, and wholly inapplicable to those who hold the doctrine of "life in Christ." It actually begs the point in question, since it assumes that man is inherently immortal, and only becomes mortal by a fiat of Omnipotence, who in mercy to His victim acts as the executioner at some *auto da fe* of the Inquisition, and gives the *coup de grace*, and puts an end to his suffering. Such a phrase as annihilation is, if possible, a deeper reflection on the Divine Being than the old dogma of eternal suffering,

since it suggests that future punishment is of the nature of torture, not retribution only, but vindictive, so that we have the double inconsistency to clear up, that God should inflict such torture at all, and then, like a Spanish inquisitor, huddle it up at the end as if ashamed of His own ferocity. All this comes, we have seen, from theologians importing without question certain conceptions of justice from the old barbarous jurisprudence of past ages. When kings and priests were capable of incredible acts of cruelty, and added the rack to the stake, the knife to the fire, we can see that the last and only act of mercy was when the executioner was permitted to give what was called the *coup de grace.* In days when "Luke's iron crown and Damien's bed of steel" were not unusual instruments for protecting the majesty of kings from the madness of private revenge, we can understand how easily mankind slipped into a false analogy from a corrupt human to a corrupt divine tribunal. To men who have not shaken off these notions it will not seem revolting to speak of annihilation as a merciful provision on God's part to get rid of the remainder of suffering in the case of the incorrigible. But this view of the subject will not bear to be listened to by those who hold that God is a God of inflexible justice and truth. "Fury is not in me," is a precious truth concerning our God; and Dr. Chalmers in a celebrated sermon on this text had reached the negative aspect of the new Theology, and like some bold explorer there stood still, as if afraid to face the consequences of his own admissions. In this respect perhaps he was not to be blamed. No man can be altogether before his age, and it must be said that the old Theology harmonized with the old jurisprudence and medicine: both were vindictive and sacrificial, and had to depart together.

It is for us in our day to take the one step farther,

and to assert the doctrine which clears the divine dealings of all vindictiveness, and sets the whole question of retribution here and hereafter free from all those confusions between our conceptions of justice, which are corrupt, and God's, which are pure. The very term "punishment" must first be cleared of the dross of human error before we are able to take up the question of the finiteness or not of suffering hereafter. Rightly considered, all divine punishment grows out of the nature of the sin itself. It is not so much a penalty, as we should say, arbitrarily approved by an external law, as the poison in a poison plant, active as soon as the berry ripens. Bishop Butler had a glimpse of this truth, that punishment is natural, not arbitrary, and we can only regret that so profound a thinker did not make better use of his own deep insight, instead of writing a mere *tu quoque* against the Deist based on a great "perhaps," which is the tone of the *Analogy*, and which makes it unsatisfactory reading to modern thinkers. Punishments, as he well describes them, are "natural," and are not "penalties," but part of the offence itself. This is the true meaning of the phrase, "*In the day* that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die." In the day, not as the old school taught, at the end of his life, and when at last he stood before the bar of God, and was there tried at the great assize, and awarded a sentence either of heaven or hell.

If punishment is then "natural," as Bishop Butler rightly describes it to be, the consequence must be, that when we speak of the remission of sin, what we truly mean is deliverance from it, and that is the only way by a death of the old evil principle, and the new birth of a new and better self. This is the true meaning of the redemption which is in Christ, and we have only to extend our horizon into the spiritual or æonian world of

the ages which lie beyond us, in order to see the doctrine of future punishment in its true light. All sin is a state of spiritual death, it is self-hood which is hell begun, and we have only to extend this thought into the far-off future to get the true conception of hell as a state, not a place. Milton's *Satan* finely touches on this—

> "Which way I fly is Hell, myself an Hell,
> And in the lowest deep a lower deep
> Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
> To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven."

The spiritual philosophy of our day calls, then, for some revision of the whole doctrine of eschatology, and it must begin at its starting-point. If punishment be natural and necessary, we see at once that attack and defence of the popular doctrine of eternal punishment are alike beating the air. At present there are three schools of thought on the subject, and their divisions may be said to cover the whole ground. There are the old Literalists, of an eternity of hell torments; there are the Annihilationists, so called, who hold the life in Christ doctrine; and lastly, there are Restorationists of one kind or other, usually classed, though they deny the phrase, as Universalists. It is certainly a hopeful sign of the times that the two extremes of opinion are coming much nearer than they would have admitted to themselves a few years ago. Dr. Farrar, on the one hand, distinctly disclaims Universalism, and Dr. Pusey, in the opposite extreme, admits that the vast majority, or all but a finally impenitent *residuum*, will be reached by God's grace either here or hereafter—either now or in some intermediate state of being. This new phrase of repentance after death, if not purgatory, is only the same thing under another name. It is the mediæval notion purged of its corruption of the efficacy of masses for the souls of

the dead as well as the living. There are Anglican divines in our day who speak approvingly of prayers for the dead, but who would scruple to go on and teach that masses can avail for a soul.

Far be it from us to compose between such litigants, or to say which of the two extremes comes nearer to the true Eschatology. We have so little light on the subject, that our safest course is to hold fast by the few fixed principles on which we can take our stand. One of these is that punishment is of the character of the offence itself, not of the nature of the being against whom the offence is committed. We may be sure of this, that God is not mocked; whatsoever a man sows, that he shall also reap. Again, we may be sure that instead of sin being an infinite evil, because committed against an Infinite Being, the reverse is the case. It is a finite evil, because it is the *vitium* or fault of a finite being. Hence, instead of that terrible conception of "salted with fire," the *urit et reficit* of Lactantius, we may take our stand on the thought that evil carries in it its own principle of dissolution. Thus it is not out of the mere sentimental thought that God is too merciful to inflict endless suffering that we revolt from the popular doctrine. We do not suppose that even the *durus pater infantum* ever held so harsh a doctrine as that God could from any necessity of His nature continue to bring beings into existence who must go on sinning, and therefore suffering, for eternity. The iron chain of necessity lay in another direction. Divines taught this because they could not rid themselves of the Cartesian dogma, that conscious thought is as indestructible and eternal as God Himself. With the decline of Cartesianism there has been room for the growth of a new class of conceptions with regard to the hereafter, and we can let go with the greatest com-

posure the old dogma of the necessary immortality of the soul.

What we cannot surrender is the very opposite truth, that evil is something inherently self-destructive, and carrying with it the principle of its own dissolution. If men could see this truth, half their difficulties as to the duration and extent of future punishments would melt away. They would lift off as the mists do at sunrise. All evil is destructive of the organism it attacks; whether it be plant or animal or man, in any case disease is incipient death. Between life and death there is a borderland, broad or narrow as the case may be, and in that borderland or marsh between life and its opposite, death, disease plants its flag, and leads over its victims one by one to the other shore. There are cases, it is true, but they are the exception, in which health may expel disease, and so death is now and then balked of its victim. Life makes a rescue, and for a time men return as Hezekiah's sun-dial went back ten degrees as it had gone down. But physiology teaches us that disease, as a rule, is the monitor of approaching death, and that dissolution follows disease as certainly as decay in plant life strikes it at the moment when it has reached maturity.

The law of disease as the prelude of death passes on from the lower to the higher world of moral and spiritual life. It is not conceivable that any organism can continue its functions when they have begun to work in a disorderly way. The plant withers, the animal sickens, and man—the last work of all—falls into incipient decay the instant that his spiritual organism has taken up the seeds of death. In any act of disobedience, even the least, the bare tasting of a forbidden fruit, there was incipient death. In that very day man truly, if not

entirely, died. This is the ground we stand on, and now its application to the doctrine that evil is self-destructive is only too apparent.

The only objection to this view is the fact that, in spite of the sentence, the race has lived on and propagated itself. But, on closer reflection, it will be seen that the objection is in reality a confirmation of the truth we are insisting on. Did we hold that Adam's "fall," as it is called, was a complete probation, and that he had committed by this one rash act of his spiritual infancy what amounted to spiritual wickedness, or the sin against the Holy Ghost, then we should suppose the sentence, "dying thou shalt die," would have instantly asserted itself to the fall. Instead of that, Adam only passed out of one educational stage, which was in reality a state of grace, into another. He came under a sentence, it is true, but he was instantly taken up as an erring child, obstinate but not impenitent, and corrected by his heavenly Father. A new discipline was prepared for him outside the garden instead of in it. Earth may be a "desert drear," but it is our home and school, with its class-room and playground side by side; but it is not our prison, much less the penitentiary and reformatory of moral waifs and strays. It sometimes becomes all that and even worse, for there are possible hells even on earth; but this is not the true conception of our state here as the preparation for a higher state of blessedness hereafter.

Such is man's state of being here. He is born in sin, in the sense that this *vitium* or vine-disease is inherent in him, and has the tendency to kill the plant unless the parasite is itself killed and the disease extirpated. This is the problem of "grace;" and while we cannot explain the limited action of grace, and that so few are apparently

saved here, we have no reason to suppose that we know the whole of God's dealings with the race. It may be that grace tarries with some till the death hour,—of which one dying thief is the type,—and with others begins beyond the veil of which—dare we add—the other thief is the type. Where Scripture is silent we should be the last to intrude into things not seen, and so we draw the line between the penitent and the impenitent thief. We say with Augustine, "One was converted that none might despair, and only one that none might presume." So far well; but to affirm the opposite, and pronounce on the eternal destiny of the one who died impenitent is equally beyond our thought. We are dogmatizing in the dark when we affirm or deny the possibility of grace ever reaching any spirits in the world of spirits. The literal meaning, which is always the simplest, of such a passage as that (1 Pet. iii. 18, iv. 6), is one which almost commits us to hold that there is some ministry of Christ *ad inferos.*

We only allude to it here as a ground for supposing that much remains that is unrevealed—

> "Behold a man raised up by Christ,
> The rest remaineth unrevealed;
> He told it not, or something sealed
> The lips of that Evangelist."

Here we should stand, or rather halt, on the borderland, sure only of this, that "His mercy endureth for ever;" and that as we can put no term or bound to His mercy to men in the flesh, there is no bar either in reason or in the character of God why the spirit-world may not be a prolonged or rather a reserved state of grace, perhaps under more favourable conditions than the present.

Nothing but what is called the practical argument

would ever hold back multitudes from embracing this merciful solution of an appalling difficulty. They are told from the pulpit by preachers, who are more pulpiteers than painstaking divines, that now is the accepted time, —and this phrase "now" is taken uncritically in the sense of now or never. In this connection the apostle is pointing out that it is now a *parte ante* not a *parte post*, and this even the context points out. But "now or never" has the right ring of earnestness; it is the categorical imperative which few can resist while the spell of the preacher is over them, and so an uncritical use of this passage is brought in to check the wavering resolutions of many. It is this kind of argument which succeeds in the case of the weak, but fails with the strong. Hence it is that our most dogmatic Churches are too generally supported by a narrowing circle of devotees, while the stronger intellects, as a rule, are conspicuous for their absence from pulpiteering divines, whose appeals are chiefly made to the weaker and more sentimental side of our nature. In too many cases preachers argue with themselves, and their audiences tacitly accept the argument as if it had force, that unless we are shut in to a decision in this life, we shall never come to the decision at all. We are told that it is practically dangerous to hold out to men the hopes of repentance beyond the grave; and then they will certainly defer repentance, as Constantine did his baptism, in order that he might step direct out of the laver sea of regeneration in white robes into a world where all walk in white.

To those who argue of heaven and holiness in this external way our only answer is, that this motive of fear and self-love acts so feebly that the thing is clear either that the author of human nature made a mistake in setting this as the mainspring of the watch, or that we are

mistaken in describing it as if it were so. The latter is by far the most likely mistake of the two, and so it is. So far from human nature being made, as Paley would describe it, as an Epicurean calculating machine to sum up its pleasures and pains here and hereafter, and strike a balance of the sum-total, the very opposite is the case. Even educated men are unable to resist a pleasure which is near in view, or to avert a pain which is far off. Every day we meet with men, not without character in other respects, but wanting in this power of prudential self-restraint. We cannot, then, bring ourselves to believe that the author of our being intended to hang our eternal happiness on so frail a thread as this. In every act of faith there is, we admit, a certain act of choice; there is the preferring of the future to the present. So Moses accounted the reproach of Christ greater treasure then the riches of Egypt; but this preference is not of the essence of faith. The essence lies in affiance to a spiritual Lord or Master whom we serve, not for the good things which He has prepared for those who unfeignedly love Him, but for His own sake. It is for His dear sake, and that alone, that we endure reproach, and which is therefore rightly called the reproach of Christ. The utilitarian and Eudæmonist theory of virtue, practised for the sake of the benefits it brings with it, has so infected English thinking, that even our Theology has taken a taint from it which it is not easy to get rid of.

No Theology, it has been truly said, is stronger than the philosophical supports on which it rests. If we raise, as the popular Theology has done in this country, where Locke and Paley were long its leading lights, a superstructure of spiritual truth on the sandy foundations of utilitarian Eudæmonism, can we wonder that the building gives signs that it is a house whose foundations

are on the sand? The Wesleyan appeal to conversion on the Paleyan ground that it is worth our while to believe in God, for we shall be damned if we do not; this, in blunt terms, is the mainspring of much of our modern preaching. It is the keynote to a large majority of the tracts in circulation. Anecdotes such as those of the boy who went out boating on Sunday and was drowned, or of another who went on the ice and fell in,—when gospel appeals start from such a base of terrorism, we are reminded of the story of the Tower of Siloam, and we are warned not to draw a moral from special judgments unless we know all the facts of the case, which we certainly do not. There is no question that much of the coarser forms of infidelity of our day, which jibe at the whole doctrine of heaven and hell, would lose its point with the artisan classes if it were not for their revolt at the crude, external way in which heaven and hell are represented as places, not states. If we add to this the immoral conception that a bare act of deathbed repentance and faith will, in some magical way, waft a soul clean out of one state into the other, can we wonder that the hard-headed artisan turns from this Theology? An interviewer the other day was sounding Barnum, the American showman, as to his views on life in general, not excluding his religious opinions. This was Barnum's shrewd, mother-wit conception of the immorality of that which passes for sound teaching in orthodox circles:—

"A pirate who has killed in cold blood a hundred men is caught, repents on the gallows, and says, 'I am sorry for what I have done, and I am going to Jesus.' A certain proportion of those he has killed, say fifty per cent., having been cut off in their sins without time for repentance, are supposed to be damned. Is it conceivable

as consistent with the justice of God, that the repentant pirate should look over the battlements of heaven down upon these fifty whom he sent to hell, and complacently congratulate his redeemed soul upon his luck in having had time to repent before he was hanged?"[1]

Now this is crudely and even coarsely put, but the common conscience of mankind is tested by extreme cases of this kind. Intuitional Theology should never shrink, as the old dogmatic school often did, from testing its doctrines, by laying them before the common people. If rejected with contempt because they lead to revolting conclusions like the foregoing, the Theology of the intuitional school, with whom conscience is final, should be ready to take them back and revise them, and ascertain where the lurking error may be. It does not ask mankind to do as Hobbes, in his cynical way, said is best done with religion, to be taken like pills whole, and not chewed. Deathbed repentance, with what the Jesuits call attrition, or the fear of its penal consequences, substituted for contrition or real sorrow for sin; this is the immoral element in the popular Eschatology which must be struck out, and something better put in its place. The true criterion of the doctrine of future punishment is whether it emphasizes that great Old Testament truth, that every transgression and disobedience must receive at one time or another, here or hereafter, in the flesh or the spirit, its due recompense of reward. Some men's sins go before to judgment, and some they follow after. This is enough for us to know without our attempting to adjudicate when and in whose case the retribution is complete here, and in whose case the judgment tarries for the unseen world. As a rule, it may be said that believers, like

[1] *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 1, 1884.

Lazarus, receive their evil things here, and are comforted hereafter, while unbelievers are comforted here and tormented there. If we throw in the element of infinity into the compensation, it seems to us to disturb the balance; but this we have no right to do. Certainly there is no hint of any term to the sufferings of Dives; but the silence is equally explicit on the other side, and we have no right to make any meaning out of the silence of Scripture in one sense and not in another.

Here we should wish to leave the question, and should do so if the dogmatic school would allow us to drop the veil. But when Dr. Pusey brings forward a *catena* of patristic authorities all bearing in one direction, and sums it up with "hear the Church's appeal as to what is of faith as to everlasting punishment," we are inclined to raise a protest in the name of conscience, and on the ground that we are at least as good judges of the mind of God as they were. We probably live in a world which has far more enlightened and humane conceptions both of God and man than a society stricken with moral leprosy, and carrying in it the seeds of its own dissolution, as the later Roman Empire was.

For these reasons we refuse to allow these so-called Fathers to be lords over our conscience. We look elsewhere to the spiritual intuitions of an age which has emancipated the slave, has mitigated the ferocity of war, and softened our criminal code, until punishment is no longer merely vindictive, but solely retributive and reformatory. This century which we live in is far from a golden age, but it is an advance on all preceding, and hence we stake our hopes on a Theology of the future rather than of the past. In all probability there are crudities of conception as well as crudities of practice, in

which the twentieth century will be as ashamed of the nineteenth as the nineteenth is of the eighteenth. But if so, this only teaches us not to speak of our present standpoint as finality. In all probability the eschatology which we glance at as ours, will be superseded a century hence as too crude for that age. We shall be quite content to see it so, provided only that the dead in every case bury their dead. Let us consign to the grave the dead conceptions of our age, when terrorism reigned alike in Theology and law: we shall regard with great complacency the time when our turn comes to be so carried out and buried by the men of a coming age.

As we have said, none of the three usual hypotheses, Particularism, Universalism, and the old doctrine of a never-ending place of punishment, exactly commend themselves to us as the Eschatology of the future. What, then, it will be asked, is the position which we take up? Is not the logical distribution complete between these three hypotheses? and is there room for a fourth, distinct from any of these three? Our answer is that there is. The fourth position which realizes all that is true in the other three hypotheses, and rejects their error, is this, that life is a discipline, but that the term of discipline does not necessarily end with our present life in the flesh. If there be a spirit-world at all, may it not be a place, not of a lesser, but a higher discipline than the present? What is to forbid the education of all spirits when brought into the light of the Father of spirits? This was the keynote to all the later teaching of the late Thomas Erskine; and though, like a wise master-builder, he laid a foundation only, and left others to build on it, there can be no doubt as to the direction of his thought, and the

fruit it is bearing among many thoughtful minds. Naturally enough, he rejected that American type of Universalism which is only a crude and sensuous reaction against old school Calvinism, and of which thoughtful Americans of almost all schools are already ashamed.

The truth which Erskine taught, and which we desire as his disciples to lend emphasis to, is, that education, not probation, is the keynote to God's dealings with mankind. If we discard the latter for the former term, the gain for Eschatology is enormous. We at once get rid of an inadequate and misleading term, and replace it by one which is consistent with all we can conceive of the Fatherly character of God, and which also harmonizes with our advanced ideas of jurisprudence. The jurisprudence of our day has begun to recognise the necessity for abandoning a vindictive for a reformatory code of punishment. We no longer regard the debtor as the slave of the creditor, to be locked up and, perhaps, left in danger of being starved to death, as was not uncommonly the case a century ago. The Algerine corsairs were not more cruel than the creditors of last century; and there are charitable trusts now lying idle for the relief of the victims of these land pirates as well as sea pirates. We have changed all this. Are we to suppose that our conceptions of God's vindictive dealing with sin in the debtor's prison of eternity are to remain the same in an age which has sold the very sites on which debtors' prisons once stood.

In all these aspects of the divine character, the age calls for change; and the theology which will not bend must break. In halls of so-called science, where popular infidelity sets up its rival temples, this is the usual jibe against Christians; and the Christian advocate who takes

up the challenge should go with a better doctrine than the popular one if he expects to be listened to.

But with the education of the human race as our key-note, and the concession that "defects of doubt and taints of blood," which place too many beyond the reach of education here, shall all be redressed hereafter, our course is clear for laying down a juster and truer type of Eschatology. "All souls are mine," and "that the soul that sinneth—it and it only shall die;" this is the correction by Ezekiel of the unjust conceptions of the Jews of his day. "Are not my ways equal, are not your ways unequal?" we may go on to say of the harsh and partial schemes of salvation which pass current in orthodox circles. They impugn as much the justice as the goodness of God, since, by a bare act of repentance, a long score of sin is supposed to be wiped out in the case of some. In the very teeth of this immoral doctrine we see, in the case of David, how God teaches us that repentance may lead to reformation of character, but never to the cancelling of the eternal law that sorrow dodges sin as the sleuth-hound the track of blood. The Greeks had their Nemesis, and Hebrew theology was equally stern and unsparing. No Eschatology, then, can be true or will stand which leaves the least loophole of escape for the natural law of retribution following up even the repentant sinner. Our God is a consuming fire; where the carcase is, there must the eagles be gathered together. If there is the smallest flaw of character even in the brightest saint, it will be tried by fire, and that fire of God's love—which is also wrath—will destroy the dross and save only the gold. Even divines of the old school, such as Bengel, saw and recognised this, and hence the Eschatology of the future will at once be more stern and also more merciful than that of the past.

Lastly, with regard to the resurrection of the body and the judgment to come, we have much to learn and not a little to unlearn. The old doctrine was, and is, that till the last day our bodies lie sleeping in the grave, and that at the last trump we shall all rise together, and then and there instantly be clothed again with our bodies, which will be the same, and yet not the same, as the actual bodies of flesh which are laid in the grave and are turned to dust. There was supposed to be some material point of identity between the two: hence the desire to be buried on holy or at least consecrated ground. If, as on the *campo santo* of Pisa, we are laid on earth actually fetched from Palestine, this was best of all; the next best thing was to lie under a chancel hard by the place where the stoled priest brought Christ down from heaven in the similitude of bread and wine. Not far off from this, either in church or churchyard, our bodies could rest in hope; but to lie in unhallowed ground, as the unbaptized or suicides were, as in Ophelia's case—

> "Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her,"

this was a hard case.

The Eschatology of the future will emancipate itself from this last shred of Materialism—the resurrection of relics. No one has helped on that true conception of the resurrection body so much as Swedenborg, who, from the spiritual point of view, taught that man is not a soul in a body, but, instead, that the soul or spirit is the formative principle of that body. The old conception was, that God built up a physical framework of the laws of physiology, and then breathed into it—as a kind of adjunct—what we call the living soul. The very reverse is the true order. The soul—a formative principle, how or in what way we cannot say—proceeds from God, and

at the birth, then, or conception, this soul begins to build around itself a body or temple of flesh and blood, and during life the soul is ever building and renewing this fabric of clay. Then death comes and destroys the temple, and what is left then for the spirit to do? It begins again, as we conceive, its old work of building up a body, but on new lines and with fresh materials. "Destroy this body, and in three days I will build it again," was the challenge thrown out by Christ. In His case the formative principle rebuilt the spiritual body literally in three days. Thirty and three years in His case was this temple of flesh in building, and when violently destroyed on the cross, as the first temple had been, with axes and hammers, we should not have supposed that it would be reared again in three days. Indeed, the popular doctrine of the resurrection of the body fails to realize this at all. Strictly speaking, the death of Christ in their view is only a case of suspended animation. He yielded up the ghost: in this sense He truly died. So far they are not Docetists. But they lay stress on the thought that His holy body saw not corruption. They suppose that because wrapped in spices, and so far preserved from outward contamination or the defilement of material decay, that the same material body rose which had been laid in the grave. To our thinking it was the same, and yet not the same. The law that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God applies, of course, as much to the flesh of Christ as of other men of women born. But how, and in what way, flesh was transmuted into spirit, and the buried seed-corn absorbed into and taken up by the resurrection plant during the few short hours that He lay in the grave, it is idle to inquire. Thus is the miracle the same as when water was changed into wine, or five loaves

multiplied into the bread of five thousand,—both alike in a moment of time. There are some who are said to be changed in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, as there are others in whose case the change is spread over the long interval between death and the general resurrection.

All flesh is, we know, not the same flesh; and there are different ages of growth and of the duration of life even among animals otherwise not very unlike. Why parrots and crows should live so much longer than other birds, why an elephant's life should be at least five times that of a horse, no law of physiology seems to point to. It may be so, in the same way that there are reasons why the transformation of a natural into a spiritual body through the process called death should be retarded in some cases and accelerated in others. Conjecture on this question is idle,—all that we lay stress on is, that every man is to rise in his own order. Christ is the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's at His coming, then cometh the end.

Hence it is that this doctrine of the resurrection of the body both clears up the true meaning of death and the intermediate state, and also reconciles a standing difficulty between those who hold the immortality of the soul and those who assert the resurrection of the body. The majority of Christians hold both, but hold them in the crude external way which the Latin Fathers taught and the Church of Rome has adopted in the creed of the Council of Trent. According to Augustine, there are two distinct sources of immortality in man. There is a soul inherently immortal, and also an immortalized, because resurrection, body. With a strange perversion of Scripture, through a hard literalism which killed its spirit, Augustine and the Latin Fathers generally held

a doctrine equivalent to the resurrection of the flesh. The phrase the "flesh" was too unscriptural to escape condemnation at the Council of Rimini; but though formally a heresy, the popular, and indeed the orthodox, doctrine was little better than the Egyptian notion of the soul's exodus, which was to return at the *Apocatastasis* and revivify the mummified body. The fable of the phœnix was supposed to symbolize this, and in the usual way that myths grew, there was first the idea suggesting the fact, and then the fact brought forward to corroborate the idea. To illustrate the soul's return to the body, the fable was invented of a bird which, at the end of five centuries, set fire to its own nest, and then sprang alive out of its ashes. In return, this fable once set going helped to strengthen and confirm the Egyptian notion, which was the last degradation of Materialism, that the soul in the same way was bound to return to its mansion of clay.

This was the patristic doctrine of the resurrection of the body, or rather of relics which, however modified, is substantially the popular doctrine of the Anastasis to this day. That the Anastasis begins at death, and not at the last day, whatever that means, has not been taught by any section of the Christian Church, so far as we are aware, until Swedenborg. He was the first to throw a bridge between philosophy and Theology on this subject. Till his time the two stood opposed. There were on the one hand the philosophers, teaching the truth that man is an immortal soul placed in a mortal body, and on the other hand there were the theologians proclaiming the other truth, that this mortal body was to be one day or other immortalized, so as to live on as asbestos does in a fire never to be quenched, or in eternal felicity. This resurrection, or rather this re-collection of the scattered particles

of our individual dust, was, of course, the miracle of miracles, and naturally added another to the many stumbling-blocks of philosophers in the way of the acceptance of the Christian revelation. So it came about that philosophy and religion had each its own Eschatology. The faith of philosophers was the old *animula vagula blandula* theory of the Stoics, the vital spark of heavenly flame which, in quitting this mortal frame, hovered about as the psyche or butterfly until it found some new flower to fasten on in Elysian fields. As a set-off to this, Christians till the other day held a kind of churchyard doctrine of the hereafter. Men's thoughts on the grand theme of existence after death went down among the tombs instead of up into the heights, and were accordingly and constantly leaning to a materialism of which the Chiliastic errors of Papias and others were only the logical outcome. This type of thought lasted almost down to our day. The classic revival of the Renaissance did nothing to purge the Reformation of this gloomy mediævalism. On the contrary, it only set up as a rival Theology a kind of revived paganism, against which Christianity had to fight for its very existence, and the result was a struggle between Deists and the orthodox party, in which no quarter was asked or given.

Such was the state of thought down to the age of Swedenborg, who seems to have struck out by a kind of spiritual intuition that the soul is a formative principle, and if immortal at all must create for itself a new and a spiritual body. He laid this down as the true reconciling point between faith and philosophy. We see the contrast between the old and the new in this. The old school taught the dependence of the soul on the body. If, instead of this Materialism thinly disguised, we reverse our order of conception, we then see how the

soul is a formative principle, and that the body only grows and lives as the form or manifestation of an informing spirit, a vital power which is vegetative in plant life, is animal in animal life, and becomes rational and moral in man. With much that is mystical in Swedenborg as to correspondences, and of each organ being made up of a number of infinitely little organs, which was a strange anticipation of homœopathy and the germ theory of disease, there was a profound truth in his doctrine of the dependence, not of the soul on the body, but of the body on the soul. The soul, as he held, is "subtle and all-pervading, has an ethereal envelope, and is in the perfect shape of the human body."

Such a doctrine as this lends itself obviously as the reconciling point between faith and philosophy. There were spiritualizing philosophers of the Cartesian and Spinoza school, and there were materializing believers of the orthodox type. But between them there could be no common ground, nor can there be unless we hold that soul and body are not twain, but one. The dualism of the old school left nothing but a wrangle between faith and philosophy as to whether the entire man was an embodied or a disembodied spirit. To the philosopher body was an incumbrance, and the resurrection of the body accordingly an absurdity. It was as retrograde a step as if we put man back among animals, or reduced the animal to the sponge state of existence, half-plant half-animal. Two rival theories, both dualistic, contended for supremacy; the one laid stress on the immortality of the soul, the other on the resurrection of the body, but in both cases the assumption was dualism. The philosophy of the future is monistic, and so far as we know Swedenborg was the first to teach it. He scouted the notion of a soul in a body, or a soul out of a body.

The one was a chimera or creature of fancy as much as the other. Disembodied spirit and an unspiritual body were equally unmeaning phrases. Body and soul, or rather spirit, are related to each other as a plant is to its vital formative principle. To every seed its own body, this is a law running throughout the universe. In man there is a breath of lives. He has, strictly speaking, three souls or lives; he has a vegetative soul, an animal soul, and a rational soul, but the higher always conditions and shapes the lower. Bichat, the physiologist, first pointed out the duality of lives in men. He has a plant life which is unconscious, and a sentient life which is dimly conscious. But here Bichat, as a physiologist, stopped. We go on to hold a third kind of psyche, which is moral and rational, and this psyche in man, which is the soul of his soul, is also a pneuma, something which is God-inspired, and consequently has in it the germ of immortality.

Thus, unlike animals, man at death does not fall into dissolution and render back his whole being into the tomb, which is the womb of nature and perchance its grave. He retains the psyche-pneuma, and this with its inherent vital power raises itself after a brief trance, which we may call the passage from one life to another, into a new form of activity. It begins to prepare to itself a body, and this we may say is the true meaning of that second birth which we call death. Hence, from this point of view, which is substantially Swedenborg's doctrine of the Anastasis, it is a process which begins at the moment of death, though it is impossible to say and indeed to conjecture when it is consummated. In any case, and on this alone, we desire to lay stress; this view, based as it is on the philosophy of monism, puts an end to the conflict of ages between the dualism of mortal

body and immortal soul. That ill-united pair, between whom faith and philosophy have failed to tie the mystical knot, are now united and are no longer twain, but one flesh, and so we may say with the Church Father, *O felix connubium si non admiserit adulterium.* The true meeting-point of soul and body is the monistic philosophy which Swedenborg so strangely anticipated. It is summed up in the Spenserian lines—

> "For of the soul the body form doth take,
> For soul is form and doth the body make."

When we hold that the soul is not merely the tenant of the body, but is the formative principle of the house itself, the resurrection is not only cleared of unnecessary difficulties, such as the re-collection of the scattered particles of dust, but it also falls in with all the analogies of nature. In plant and in animal life the seed is a formative principle. It has a power beyond other cells of building around itself an infinitude of organisms, which are more than reproductions of the same primitive cell. The higher the life the greater the differentiation. Heart, lungs, liver, brain are not only distinct organs, but also with distinct secretions in all animals of higher type; and all we know of the mystery of life is this, that the soul as a vital principle has this strange power of collecting around it particles with very various chemical affinities, and holding in suspense the natural tendency of those particles to fly off and seek some new affinity. Life is thus a continued miracle—it is a long suspense of the law of chemical affinity.

If this be so, we have the less difficulty in seeing how in the unseen world the soul or formative principle can begin to build around itself a new and spiritual body. All is in perfect analogy with what we know of

the operations of nature. The base line of physiology is *ab ovo omnia*, and psychology must take the same base line too. Why not unite them together as Swedenborg has done, and so the soul as a formative principle is seen not only to be immortal, but also the germ of what we describe as the immortality of the resurrection body. The phrase, a spiritual body, is unmeaning on the supposition of the resurrection of the flesh. But we assume that soul can build around itself one kind of body here, *i.e.* of flesh, and another hereafter, which is a body of spirit, and our analogy is complete.

Here we may pause, and review the ground which we have gained in the Eschatology of the future. We have seen—(1) That future punishment is not arbitrary but natural: whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. (2) We have also seen that this being so, the question is idle whether few or many are saved. Universalism and Particularism are alike unwarranted assumptions of an unknown hereafter. The world to come will be much more like the present than many suppose. Death is but a narrow stream between a lower life in the flesh and a higher life under conditions of being infinitely more favourable for the development and growth of moral character. (3) This leads us, in the third place, to discard the term probation, and to speak instead of the education of the human race. Hence, if we are led on to think of future punishment as bearing a reformatory character, not a vindictive, we can still hold the doctrine of God's retributive justice, rendering to every man the due reward of his deeds; but in measure, and with every allowance for hereditary taints and defects. (4) We are led in the last place to review the old contrast between mortal body and immortal soul, and to see how shallow this contrast is, based as it is on

a philosophy of the dualism of mind and matter now out of date. The soul is not the tenant of the body, with a lease of years to run here in the flesh, and then to be renewed on a perpetuity grant at the resurrection morning. This crude dualism must give way to the monistic conception of matter being only the outcome of mind and of body, as the form of which soul is the formative principle. When we have once grasped this thought, the Anastasis may be said to begin at the moment of death—the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, which are two distinct clauses in the Apostles' Creed, are in reality one and the same, determined not, as we may say, at the day of judgment, but at the day of death, which is in fact the beginning of judgment to each one of us. Whether the highly symbolic language of Christ and His apostles really requires us to hold that there is one great day of gaol delivery and assize for the whole human family, or whether it is a continuous process extending on indefinitely through the ages, it would be unwise to decide. As often as not, a day in Scripture means an extended period, and the day of the Lord is too often used in that sense to make us at all determinate as to any one point of time beyond the hour of death marking the eternal condition of any of God's creatures. But, as we have said, we have no strong deliverance to offer on this subject. If any cling to the notion of a great day of assize, they may do so if it assists them more firmly to grasp the great truth that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." This is the essential thought on which we cannot be too explicit, and indeed in truth it may be said that all Eschatology turns on it. If men are to be judged at all for the deeds done in the body, it clearly must be a state in which we are

in a sense "naked," absent, *i.e.* from the body and present with the Lord.

Such, in brief outline, is the Eschatology which seems to us to be the Eschatology of the future. It corrects the old Eschatology only in those points where the old is clearly defective, from its being based on unscientific conceptions such as that of "the bodies of men howsoever corrupted, wheresoever in their parts dispersed, how long soever dead, shall hereafter be re-collected in themselves, and united to their own souls" (see Pearson on The Creed, Article xi.). Again, it corrects the old Eschatology on the important doctrine that the eternity of future punishment rests on the necessary immortality of the soul, the one statement being as unfounded as the other. In all these respects the old must give place to the new, and in proportion as divines consent so to revise their teaching, will they be able, like the scribe instructed, to bring out of their treasure things new and old.

CHAPTER XV.

OF ANGELS.

EVOLUTION has conquered along the whole line. To use the phrase of one of its ablest exponents, "There lies in the lowest form of life the promise and the potency of the highest." The scale of existence is a ladder, whose base is laid in the lowest form of plant life, but whose summit reaches up into the heaven of spiritual being, among natures whose perfection it is to awake up in God's likeness, and to be satisfied therewith. We have no right to limit the phrase evolution to that series of growths upward, from the cell of the plant to the soul in man, and then to assume that the series there abruptly ends, or that, like a recurring decimal, life returns on itself. This would be little better than the Buddhist conception of the wheel of life, each birth being only a fresh migration, and out of which there is no escape but in non-being. If we use the phrase evolution at all, we have as good a right to assume that there is an upward series above man, as well as a downward series below man. Every lower form of life contains in it the promise and potency of the higher; we may surely go on to see a promise and potency of the angelic world in the soul of man, as the evolutionist sees the promise and potency of the highest forms of organic life in the humblest form of the plant cell. Does not

the phrase evolution mock us with its half-meaning, unless it goes up into the spiritual world? Should we not then say of man in despair—

> "Man, his last work, who seemed so fair,
> Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
> Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
> Who built him fanes of useless prayer."

Are we to close with the words in which despair and hope strongly mingle—

> "What hope of answer or redress,
> Beyond the vail, beyond the vail?"

The old Theology had its own vision of angels; the new Theology also must set up a Jacob's ladder reaching from earth to heaven. It is the Son of man who is the meeting-point between all lower forms of life on earth and the higher forms of life that may people, for aught we know to the contrary, those worlds beyond number which look down on us nightly as the stars. We have no right, in a word, to take up the term evolution and use it up to a certain point, as if we are to say with the Greek sophist that man is the measure of all things. This phrase of the sophist is worse than misleading, if we allow the modern scientist free use of the word evolution, and then break off at man as if the last term in the ascending series absolutely ended in man. We should then get no farther than the Buddhist, to whom life is a fountain, leaping up in spray, and falling in foam around its own basin of material existence. It is a wheel, or rather a treadmill, in which incarnation or the imprisonment of mind in matter goes on for ever, until some happy spirits fly off as sparks into Nirvana, and emancipate themselves thus at once from evil and from existence together.

Such are some of the false conclusions that we arrive at if we allow ourselves to use the term evolution of all lower life up to man, and then profess ourselves agnostics, or indifferent to any promise or potency of life in natures higher than man, or in worlds beyond the present.

The new Theology, then, should plough with the heifer of science, and so guess the riddle. We should take up the phrase evolution, and go on to ask whether it is not reasonable to suppose that man may be only the middle term of a series in an ascending as well as a descending scale. Virgil describes the roots and branches of a tree as corresponding exactly in depth, breadth, and height. As far down as the roots go, so high up spring the branches; as wide as they spread out underground, so wide do they extend outward from the trunk alone. This may be a mere fancy, but it has a root of truth in it. In any case, we may argue from analogy, reasoning, as all analogy does, from the known to the unknown. We may fairly assume, till we have proof to the contrary, that the ascending series does not abruptly terminate in man. The presumption lies the other way, and, like Columbus, we refuse to stand at the shore of the ocean and pronounce that no land lies beyond; that there is no life above the present, no series beyond man.

The old Theology cut the knot of the difficulty by its doctrine of creation, which was Deistic. To the old Theology it was as simple to conceive of the Deity beginning at one end of the scale as at the other. Its theory of angels, accordingly, was that they were spiritual beings struck off by a fiat of Omnipotence, perfect and complete, peccable it is true, else the fallen angels could have had no place in their system, but notwithstanding

their fall, inherently and essentially immortal. How far this Miltonic conception of angels has its roots in Hebrew revelation, and how far in a Theogony like that of Hesiod, it is needless to inquire. But the old Theology is defunct for other reasons than this, that it grew out of an uncritical fusing together of Greek and Hebrew traditions of cosmogony. Milton himself, were he among us, would be the first to admit that the ruling ideas of the seventeenth century are not the same as those of the nineteenth. Creationism, based on a bare and bald conception of Omnipotence, was the ruling idea of the seventeenth; evolution, or the law of growth from within, is the ruling idea of the nineteenth. We are bound, then, to reshape our conception of angels in accordance with the change of ruling ideas. To the modern mind, angels are little more than the "spirits of just men made perfect." We can no longer think of them as beings struck off, and complete at a single fiat of Omnipotence. They are beings who, like ourselves, have passed on from some lower to a higher platform. Swedenborg may have gone too far in affirming, with a dogmatism which none but a seer could presume to, that angels and devils are only men perfect either in goodness or wickedness, and so fixed in their final state of eternal heavens or hells. But the Swedenborg conception is at least a better departure for the new Theology than that of Milton, which is only Hesiod's Theogony set in Biblical phrase. Over the whole subject of the hereafter there hangs a thick veil of solemn mystery, and our truest wisdom is to stand and wait. But since conjectures have been offered, and a patchwork theory of the rise and revolt of angels has been made up by theologians piecing together Hebrew traditions with those of Greek mythology, we are bound at least to discard this, even if we have nothing better

to put in its place. The new science of comparative philology, which has almost created for us the science of comparative religion, has explained to us the growths of these myths of the wars of the gods, and the revolt of the lower gods or Titans against the Olympian deities. It was the Greek way of explaining the supersession of the gods of the aborigines or conquered race by those of the conquering Dorians or Hellenes. But this higher criticism, based on ethnology, was not known in the age when the old Theology constructed its angelology. Hence, excusably enough, men leaped to the conclusion that the legends of Prometheus and the Titans pointed to the same thought as the Hebrew tradition of the angels who kept not their first estate. We have since learned caution in this respect, and as the Greeks confounded the Sanscrit Pramantha or fire-drill with Prometheus the discoverer of fire, so by the same mistake Bryant and his school confounded the Titans of Greek with the rebel angels of Hebrew legend. But, rejecting all this, we can at least say that the ruling ideas of Creationism, which underlay the angelology of the old Theology, must be replaced by those of evolution, which are the base line of the new.

Our point of departure, then, is this. All life is a process upward from beneath. It has reached its last and highest term, so far as we know at present, in man, and there science breaks off with no further promise or potency beyond the ultimate perfection of the race through culture and science. At this point faith takes up the problem. It stands Columbus-like on the shore of the ocean of death, nor does it fear to launch out into the deep. It looks up at night and sees worlds on worlds above it. These specks of light glitter like beads in the midnight sky; they stand out there like stepping-

stones inviting us across the ferry, and raising our hopes that this is only one of many worlds either habitable in the future or inhabited in the past. We ask, is all this promise and potency in vain? Why this waste, we say, since the Being who is infinitely wise, and who acts under the law of parsimony, or the fitting of means to ends, cannot have made all these globes of light simply to hang out as beacon fires at night for man's sole use during his short sojourn in the flesh? As far as animal existence on this globe is concerned, these stars seem apparently useless. But to the astronomer these worlds of light seem to belong to one of two classes. Either they are like the moon, mere cinder-heaps, the ashes of some burnt-out world, or as the nebulæ, they are worlds in course of formation. We thus seem "to stand forlorn betwixt two worlds—one dead, one powerless to be born." But faith does not lay down the problem in despair, because science has no solution to offer at present either through telescope or spectroscope. It returns to the task, and asks whether angels may not be glorified men, and the stars the homes of beings who, like ourselves, have come up higher out of a flesh condition into one of emancipation from the burden of the flesh. In the stellar worlds we are oppressed with the sense of space infinite, and with bodies such as ours it is impossible even to conceive of passing from star to star—

> "From luminous world to world, as far
> As the universe spreads its flaming wall."

When light itself is supposed to take centuries, or even millenniums, to pass from one fixed star to another, we are as much confounded by the telescope as by the microscope. We stand on a narrow isthmus of knowledge, with two unbounded oceans of ignorance on each side.

The only point to reassure us is this, that, as the microscope shows us organic life beneath us, all leading up to man, so we may assume at the other end of the scale that man is the first point of the macrocosm, as he is the last point of the microcosm.

Faith, then, looks up into these worlds of light, and connects stars and angels together by a link of thought, which the Hebrew expression Jehovah-Tsabaoth throws some light on. As Jehovah is the Being who was, who is, and who is to come, so there may be worlds which have passed out of being and are burned out scenes of life, as we conjecture the moon is. Again, there may be worlds which are the homes of intelligent beings, as this earth of ours at present is. What is to forbid the last supposition of all? There may be homes preparing for us,—"in my Father's house are many mansions,"—and though much that has been written on this subject by the late Stanley Faber and others is purely conjectural, we are not to conclude that it has no foundation in sober thought. Into the discussion of the plurality of worlds, on which Whewell and Brewster in our day took sides, as Fontenelle and others have done in past ages, we need not here enter. The question is one beyond our present powers, since astronomy, even aided by the spectroscope, tells us only too little of the stellar worlds, as again we know only too little of what a spiritual body means, and what material conditions may be necessary for its existence at all. What is it to us to know whether, as Whewell contends, all other worlds than ours are utterly uninhabitable, or as Brewster inclined to think, the planets at least show indications of something like summer and winter, and changes of climate, as well as other conditions of life? What do we know about a spiritual body, whether it depends on light, as all life at

present does, or whether it may not be self-luminous, and a giver instead of a receiver of light? It is idle, till we have solved this previous question of the spiritual body, to waste time on discussions of the plurality of worlds which, ever since Fontenelle's day, have only been taken up to be laid down again as insoluble.

We then leave the question at the point where the Scripture leaves it, among the things of which we cannot speak particularly. It tells us about angels, and that they are ministering spirits sent forth to those who shall be heirs of salvation. It also holds out to us the hope that we too shall be equal with the angels, when, as children of the resurrection, we neither hunger nor thirst, marry nor are given in marriage. But here the record breaks off, and Faith is left to wait and watch with her sister Hope through the night-time of existence here. But till the end comes, Faith should take Hope by the hand, and not bate one jot of expectation that the gate of the grave opens to us upwards into an existence as wide as the starry universe which we see at night. Sir David Brewster may have used rhetorical language when he spoke of the plurality of worlds as the "faith of the philosopher and the hope of the Christian." *Quid philosophes ae Christianus,* we may say of those ill-assorted adjectives. But it is none the less true that there are many mansions in the Father's house, and that Christ is both preparing us for the place and the place for us. On this point the new Theology takes its stand as firmly as the old. What, then, is the contrast between the two on the subject of angelology? It confines itself to this one point, that the old Theology is Creationist and the new Evolutionist. Hence the new demurs to the thought that angels were created as molten metal is run into a mould,—*aus einem Guss,* as the Germans would

say. We incline to the view that angels, if not glorified men,—on which Swedenborg is far too positive,—have at least passed through conditions of being similar to, if not quite the same, as men have. On no other terms could we see how we shall be equal with the angels, unless their probation grew in some sense as ours did out of a contrast between flesh and spirit. In this sense we see the point of the expression—the elect angels. The fall of the angels through pride alone is assumed on far too narrow grounds to be glanced at by the apostle (1 Tim. iii. 6) as if pride alone was the condemnation of the devil. But not to notice other objections, it would never do to build a doctrine of the unseen world on a passing allusion even of an inspired apostle. The foundations in this case would not bear the superstructure. We confine ourselves, then, to the thought that angels, like men, have passed up the scale from one height of being to another, and what is to forbid other advances beyond those. This may be the meaning of the heavenly hierarchy: angels, principalities, powers, dominions, and thrones,—all of which are abstractions, terms purposely so employed, since we do not know the precise form in which this hierarchy of beings above man is constituted and whence it sprung clothed.

It is enough to see the whole subject in the light of analogy, and to translate the old angelology of the Church into terms such as the reigning ideas of our age will allow and let pass. *Ab ovo omnia* is the reigning idea of our day. Evolution, or the law of growth from within, is demanded everywhere. When the Church, then, declares her belief in an order of beings exalted above men, and the claim is allowed by all who are not Sadducees or sceptics, we have to take care that the claim is made reasonable by being translated into a class of conceptions

based on the biological law of growth, and so in harmony with the reigning ideas of an age. This we do when we speak of angels as akin to glorified men, if not quite the same; and here we may leave the subject. It has been treated with much originality by Godet in his chapter on angels,—the first in his series of Old Testament studies. His argument amounts to this, that there are four categories or orders of being. The lowest is plant life, in which the species is all and the individual nothing. In the next stage we find in the animal the species is strong, and the individual life is there, but in its lowest form. In man we find something like a balance between nature and person. The race is not all in all in the individual, but the person is there coming up out of the race. The inference obviously is, that to these three proportionals there must be a fourth, to find which should be as simple as a sum of rule of three. In the angelic world the relations which we see in the plant of the individual to the species should be exactly reversed. The species should be absorbed in the individual, as we find actually to be the case if we put together the few intimations of Scripture as to the existence of a race of beings above sex distinctions, and raised beyond the limitations which make us members one of another, and part of a whole which we call the human race.

To this theory of Godet we have nothing to object. The only remark which we need add is, that analogy would seem to suggest that angels have passed through a lower stage of being, and were not perfected as we are, not without trial, under conditions of a flesh existence similar to, if not quite the same, as we have to pass through. This may be so or not, but if we are to reason, as Godet does, from the law of continuity, then it is more reasonable to suppose angels to have risen in the

way described, than to have sprung into being, as a diamond is formed, at a single flash of creative power.

So little is told us of beings above us in the scale of creation, and so little is gained by launching out into crude conjectures, that we had better here pause. All we would say in conclusion is, that the new Theology is as opposed to the Sadducean denial of angel and spirit as the old. But it has learned greater caution in discussing the whole subject of spirit, and beyond anything else, it is averse to holding any theory of pure spirits, or disembodied spirits as they are sometimes called. "Eternal form shall still divide" the eternal mind of each, and the most reasonable hypothesis therefore is, that angels are beings who, like us, beginning in the flesh, are perfected in the spirit. In any case, at this point we cross the border-line between flesh and spirit, and recognise the truth of the apostle's words, "Howbeit that was not first which is pneumatical, but that which is psychical, and afterwards that which is pneumatical."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

THE new Theology should have some teaching on the subject of the second advent, as it is a doctrine which has had to bear the reproach of that most distorted and crude literalism which we commonly associate with what is known as millenarian opinion. It is only then what we may expect that the subject of the latter-day reign of Christ, and the final setting up of His kingdom with power among men as a kind of theocracy, has been set aside, if not actually rejected, as a form of Judaizing heresy, by nearly all sober and serious thinkers. Before we turn to the inquiry as to what we mean by the Lord's second advent and personal reign, it is perhaps as well to ask the previous question, What do we understand by the Lord's Person? If we cannot conceive the glory of His resurrection body, and lose ourselves, as the Lutherans do, in mere verbal subtleties as to its ubiquity and infinite divisibility, would it not be as well to pause before we go on to discuss what we mean by His personal reign? Clearly we must see that such as the Person of Christ is, such must be His personal reign. The second advent must lie in the same region of "things hoped for," that the first advent lay in to those devout souls who, before Christ's coming, were waiting for the consolation of Israel. They had no conception of the

depth of His humiliation, and so equally to us the height and depth of both advents are beyond any measuring reed of man's conception. It is best to be silent, and to nurse our hope of coming glories on the same promises which kept the faith of waiting patriarchs and prophets alight and alive for long centuries. The Simeons and Annas, who prayed in the temple, at least were not scandalized when the Lord suddenly came to His temple in such mean guise that to the eye of sense it must have seemed incredible that the Galilean babe could be the Messiah. Who can say but the outward conditions of the Lord's second advent may not be the same surprise as those of the first? They will be at least as disappointing to sense-perception. The kingdom of heaven will come as little with observation and outward pomp at the second advent as at the first.

On these grounds we might leave the subject of the Lord's second advent the same subject of hope as the nature of the resurrection body is: in both cases "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." But the need of some definite doctrine on the subject grows out of the nature of the new Theology itself. We have said that a new age calls for a new Theology. But we are not so sanguine as to suppose that by restating some of the old truths and removing a few of the incrustations of traditionalism, we shall succeed in so presenting the truth in a light that the age will accept.

The hope of a reconciliation between reason and faith lies deeper than in a mere concordat or compromise. It points to the far-off future, and is based on the belief in Christ's second coming and personal reign on earth, whatever that means. But for the present all we can do is to point out a certain inner harmony between reason and faith; others have succeeded in doing this, and

we too need not despair; and being able to point out that, we can show that in the voice of the awakened conscience there lies the true meeting-point between faith and philosophy. But when all this is said and done on our part, there will still remain the standing resistance of the flesh to the spirit. These are contrary the one to the other, for there is an abyss of radical contrariety, not broad but deep, between flesh and spirit, which never can be bridged over in our present condition of being; it is this which marks the limits of grace in this dispensation. Particularism can never pass into Universalism so long as this root of unbelief, arising from the contrast between flesh and spirit, remains uneradicated in human nature. This unbelief breaks out in the form of that evil heart of departing from the living God to which the carnal mind is ever prone. This carnal mind is enmity against God.

Flesh and spirit are not thus to be united merely by throwing some flying bridge across the abyss, such as we should describe the new Theology to be. The new Theology, if it is to be true, must not only recognise the eternal contrast between flesh and spirit as the old Theology based on Particularism did: it must also point on to the time when the contrast between flesh and spirit will cease. It is on this point of the consummation of all things that we see the bearing on this question of the Lord's second advent.

Without defining the term Christ's second advent too precisely, we regard it as the time—when and how we cannot say—when this old antagonism between flesh and spirit will be reduced, if not quite overcome. At present the Church has been living for eighteen centuries, and may live, for aught we know to the contrary, for eighteen centuries longer, on the single spiritual momentum given

to it by one mighty impulse at Pentecost, and that as the direct result of the death and resurrection of Christ its Lord and Master. On this first Pentecost, believers have lived, and will continue to live, as heirs of an estate which they have encumbered, but have never added to. This is so true, that, as believers in a crucified and now exalted Saviour, Christians are able even to glory in the cross, knowing as they do that the shame of the cross was swallowed up in the glory of the resurrection. With the Gospel of the Ascension in their hands, Christians can glory in the cross with the greatest reason as the Apostle Paul did, since the cross was a brief eclipse of the sun of their hopes. The shame was but for a moment, while the eternal weight of glory which began at His resurrection goes on heightening into His session at the right hand of God, there to reign as a king and priest in one on His throne for ever. All this believers know, and it deepens their faith as they contrast together the shame and the glory of the suffering and the triumphant Messiah. But what about the mass of mankind who have not attained this conviction, and do not see that the shame of the cross has been swallowed up in the glory of His resurrection? It is different with the world, which, unlike the Church, knows of the shame, and is at best only dimly conscious of the resurrection, if at all, and only by report of others, or by what we must call second-hand testimony. He is declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. But this is a line of evidence which escapes the world, and appeals to no tests such as the world can accept and understand. Nearly all writers on the evidences strangely overlook the text that God "gave Him to be manifest not to all the people, but to witnesses that were chosen before of God" (Acts x. 40). We are not

told the reason for this limitation of proof, and feel that since the crucifixion of Christ was public the resurrection should also have been public. The shame was notorious and open, and we ask with some surprise why in the same open way God did not roll back the stone from the sepulchre in the sight of all men, and to the confusion of those who had put Him to an open shame. It is on account of this defect of palmary proof that the Jewish people as a whole have uniformly rejected Jesus as the Messiah. His death was to them a "scandal," as it is foolishness to the Greeks; and, perhaps for the same reason in both cases, because they are not given any proof of the resurrection compensating for the shame of the cross. To us who believe both in His death and resurrection, and to whom the full evidence is vouchsafed by the best of all witnesses,—the witness within,—it is different. In our case, His resurrection is a cause producing in us a corresponding effect, in that we too are raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. We do not stand as the world does—where two ways meet—unable to face the shame, because we do not know the glory of the Messiah on whom our hopes rest. But with the world the case is different: they stand in doubt because they want the one proof without which all the usual evidences fall like sparks on water, or as seed cast on barren ground. The defect, it is true, is of their own causing, and in this sense the responsibility should rest with them. Unable to see the contrast between flesh and spirit, and not desiring for themselves deliverance from the flesh, but only indulgence to it, how can they see that Christ suffered in the flesh but was quickened in the spirit, and now lives the Lord of life to give life from the dead to all who call on Him? This is the root of all unbelief, ancient and modern, and we

have never seen a way by which dogmatists of any school are able to get over it. As far as human nature goes at present, the obstacle is insuperable, and we are shut in to the sad and somewhat harsh conclusion that this dispensation of the Gentiles is only elective and particular, as much as that of the Old Testament was. Against the ground taken up by the ultra-Calvinist, much as we may dislike it and disagree with him in his general conclusion, nothing can be said until we know the whole of the matter. The only flaw that we can see in his logic arises from his mistake of taking the part for the whole, and assuming that we know the whole of God's dealings with the human race. Gentile exclusivism is thus convicted of the same presumption in taking the part for the whole as Judaism was. To both alike the true answer is the reply of the apostle in the 5th of Romans, where the πολλοί, who are included in the redemption of the second Adam, must be as wide as the πολλοί, the multitude (mistranslated as the *many* in both cases) of the first Adam.

It is at this point that we begin to see the light which the Lord's second advent throws on this perplexing problem. At present, for failure of proof of His resurrection, not so much on the historical side as on the experimental, the world, Jewish and Gentile alike, stands in doubt and waits. But the balance which now inclines against faith might easily be righted, and it will be at His glorious appearing. His second epiphany will be a manifestation, not to a few shepherds and sages only, but before the eyes of the whole world, of that spiritual power which at His appearing will overcome the last lingering doubts of the world. Too many are still in the position of some of the five hundred to whom He appeared on a mountain of Galilee, and who still doubted. We cannot

say how the last mists of doubt will be dispersed. All that we insist on is that there will be such a manifestation to sense, so decisive that the balance, as in Thomas's case, will be set right. We know that the blessedness of those who only believe when they see can never equal that of those who, having not seen, yet have believed. This is the distinction, as we suppose, between those who are God's elect and those who are only His saved but not His elect children. But we know that if the first-fruits are holy, so also the lump is to be afterwards holy.

On these grounds we see the purpose of the second advent, and what a lift in the direction of faith it is intended to effect. In a sense, Christ's resurrection is incomplete until He has manifested Himself in His resurrection glory to all men. Hence it was that He appeared to the apostles one by one, and last of all to the Apostle Paul as to one born out of due time. But the world waits for this supreme demonstration to sense, and for want of this crowning evidence the flesh prevails against the spirit, and some are scoffers and some are sceptics. All that is called Secularism by one class, or Agnosticism by another, will go on unchecked during this dispensation, and instead of the Church prevailing against it as earnest revivalists of all schools desire, this sceptical temper is likely to prevail against the Churches. For why? The drift of science, and also the drift of modern philosophy, is all in a direction opposed to spiritual truth. As for science, instead of limiting herself to mere quantitative conceptions, as it is her duty to do, such as weight, number, and other relations, she makes a false alliance with what she calls philosophy, and sets up some half truth of mere evolution from lower forms of animal life as the whole account of man's being. Man is, we admit,

half-God, half-brute; but science takes the half for the whole. Philosophy in our day is only too content to take these idols of science and set them up for its gods. Much which passes for metaphysics and *prima philosophia*, the Pan-Idealism of Schelling and the Pan-Logicalism of Hegel and his followers, are only ingenious forms of word jugglery, by setting up an abstraction instead of the living God. It is trying to make such phrases as the Infinite and the Absolute do duty for the living God, who is both Father and King. All this is melancholy to those who see to the bottom of this reigning unbelief. It is all the more melancholy because even the Churches do not see the extent of the mischief. They are so intent on their dogmas, that they do not understand that one idol never had power to cast out another. On the contrary, in our modern pantheon of opinions, Hegel and Luther, Calvin and Kant, are all amicably set up side by side. One theory of the universe is considered to be as good as another, and the most thoroughgoing thinkers are those who openly say so, and instead of mourning over this eclipse of faith, rather exult in it. In Comte's phrase they regard the emancipation of man from his last enemy to be not from death, but from the hope of a hereafter. If we could only sink our sense of personality, this conception of immortality, as attaching only to humanity as a whole, might pass muster: but being as we are, we shrink from it with abhorrence.

Escape there is none from this deadly descent down the steep of Secularism. It is only when the age has rushed violently down this abyss of unbelief that it will discover what it ends in. They will see that Secularism is only the swine's philosophy, and must have a swinish ending. But as long as the balance between flesh and

spirit is as ill-adjusted as at present, Adam's sin will be the sin of all his posterity. They will take and eat, they will know and die. When Mephistopheles, disguised as Faust, puts the book into the student's hand after playing with his victim, the student opens and reads—

"Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum;"

the student then closes the book reverentially and retires, while after him Mephistopheles hisses in his ear—

"Take for your law the ancient saw,
And that cousin of mine the snake,
And with that likeness of yours to God
Your heart is like to break."

Such is the affecting summary of life. It is the old story, old as Adam, new as the new-born babe of yesterday. But what then? Is this all? Happily we have the encouragement and the promise, "for this cause the Son of God was manifest, that He might destroy the works of the devil." At present we see not yet all things put under Him, either in the heart of man or the universe. But soon it will be otherwise, and for this reason the Church, which has failed to convince the world by the Lord's first advent, falls back as her last reserve of power on the hope of the second advent.

The coming of Christ with power will result in the victory of the spirit over the flesh. Multitudes who do not believe now will believe then, when the last hindrance to faith is taken out of the way, and the dead weight of Secularism which now lies on the soul, "heavy as frost and deep almost as life," has been rolled away, as the gravestone over the sleeping Christ was. Christ's second advent will thus be the resurrection of many, who otherwise would not rise at all from the lower life of sense to the

higher life of spirit. We do not suppose that souls quickened only in this way ever can rise to the same heights of holiness as the elect of this dispensation. All flesh is not the same flesh,—in the same way there are spirits who are of the first-born, the hundred and forty-four thousand who are virgins and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. But besides these, the sealed twelve thousand of the twelve tribes of the mystical Israel, there are the great multitude that no man can number. Clearly, then, Multitudinism has a dispensation or Æon of its own, as Particularism has in the present. This age of the Church is the dispensation of the elect, but the age which is to follow after the Lord's second coming is to be the dispensation of the multitude, the saved nations.

The old Theology, so far as we are aware, has not laid the full stress on this contrast which it should do. Divines have been far too anxious to lay stress on the birthright and blessing to those that believe, and so they have failed to see that the Father has reserved a blessing even to the Esaus of the world. We are not making salvation easy, or opening a door wide to all; but we are desirous to point out where the Church has failed to see its future relation to the world. She has preached the cross and the doctrine of redemption by Christ's blood. But the resurrection, and its bearings on the masses of men who walk by sight and not by faith, she is unable to set forth. Nor is the fault wholly caused by the Church. The evidence itself is, for reasons which God has kept in His own counsels, defective as evidence. That phrase, that "He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead," is strangely mistranslated, and, as usual, the Revised Version passes it over. "Holding out faith to all," *i.e.* making the resurrection credible,

is the true sense of the passage (Acts xvii. 31). The resurrection of all, to be followed by a judgment to come, is now credible by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Before it seemed incredible that God should raise the dead: now it is no longer incredible, since, if death has been robbed of its prey in one instance, it may be so overcome in the case of all men. Such is the argument of the apostle in the 15th of Corinthians. Our faith, as a whole, hangs on the historical certainty of Christ's resurrection, and to stand in doubt of that is to stand in doubt of the whole truth of Christianity. This precisely marks the difference between the Church and the world. But the two societies are so mixed up at present, and so many nominal Christians are only half believers, that it is impossible to say who believe and who do not believe.

It is for the mass in the middle state, between faith and unbelief, that the Lord's second coming will be the crowning demonstration to disperse the remaining mists of unbelief. The cry of the multitudes will then be that of the Apostle Thomas, "My Lord and my God." They will exclaim, like the people assembled on Mount Carmel, "The Lord He is the God, the Lord He is the God." It will be possible (we do not forget this) for this millennial faith, so propped up on this side by sense, to end in a millennial apostasy, spoken of in apocalyptic language in the last great battle of Armageddon.

Into the meaning of this last duel of God and Satan we do not mean to enter, as the new Theology must keep to the plain-beaten path. It should only revise the teachings of the old Theology on points on which the old proclaims a truth which has gained something like Catholic consent. Such is the general doctrine of a

second advent. It is embalmed in creeds as well as endorsed by all orthodox pulpit teaching. The only point which is defective is that it gives no special reason for the Lord's personal reign, such as we are laying stress on. The old Theology, it must be said, never got beyond Particularism, and whatever larger hope it had of the salvation of all men, it was only a hidden hope. It was unable to set forth articulately the reasons why only some men are saved in this dispensation, and why all will be saved in the coming dispensation. Flesh and spirit were not contrasted by it in the same way as law and gospel, faith and works were; for want of this first antithesis men failed to see why a gospel of Particularism was a part only, and not the whole of the everlasting gospel. There are three pairs of antitheses. The Church took account only of two of these; but from a defective psychology it has not seen where the root of the evil of unbelief lay, in the flesh lusting against the spirit. This is the defect congenital with men for which they are very partially, if at all, responsible, and which will be set right with the mass of men only by the Lord at His second coming.

It is not more difficult to see how His coming will change the spiritual climate in which the masses live, than it is to see that an inclination of the earth's axis would change Nova-Zembla into a Madeira. It will come about at His appearing as spontaneously as those changes in the earth's surface when new fauna and flora spring up with an accession of sunshine. So will it be at the coming of the Son of man with power; we must wait for His coming as the signal of the first dawn of that kingdom of righteousness which all look for, and all feel to be impossible under present conditions. Between Optimists and Pessimists the Church of our day stands

as Paul did, between Stoics and Epicureans on Mars Hill, and asserts as he did the resurrection of the dead and the second advent, the two being so indissolubly connected together, that philosophic doubt with regard to the one generally leads to religious doubt with regard to the other, and so the veil of the covering cast over all nations lies like a kind of face-cloth over a dead and unbelieving world.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NEW CRITICISM.

Last of the many questions on which the new Theology has to take up a distinct position, we now turn to the new criticism. It is not saying too much when we point to the results of comparative philology as having introduced us into a new order of conceptions on history. It is as if a subterranean world had been opened to our view, and we were led into galleries and corridors which resemble the catacombs of Rome. We grope our way through the chambers of the dead, all lighted with their funeral lamps, and illustrated by the epitaphs which we can read but scarcely trace full and true.

Such is the new criticism, which from the negative stage of general scepticism all round, which was the temper of last century, has now passed into a constructive stage, in which some of our early beliefs about Greek, Roman, and Hebrew antiquities are almost if not quite rehabilitated.

It was about the middle of last century that historical criticism was born, and with it a shock was given to all our early beliefs in the historical credibility of the past. The alarm was great, but after all it was not so severe as that which believers in the Bible had to face when the old astronomy had to give way before the Newtonian. It was a hard struggle, harder than we are now aware of,

before mankind was able to leave behind the geocentric theory of the universe. In comparison with this shock given by science in the seventeenth century, that of historical criticism in the eighteenth ought to seem comparatively mild. If we are compelled to give up the Mosaic cosmogony, it seems no great sacrifice to give up the Mosaic chronology, and the Mosaic account of the rise and civilisation in Egypt and Assyria. The parallel between these two concessions is instructive, and the path of recovery is the same. Faith, wounded in both cases as to its belief in the letter of the Bible, has recovered its strength by turning from the letter which killeth to the spirit which giveth life. This recovery of faith from the attacks of science two centuries ago, may point out what we may come to when a philosophy of history and a philosophy of the Bible are seen to point to the same conclusion. The geocentric place of the earth in the universe corresponds to the Judæo-centric place given by Moses to Israel in the midst of the two cradles of civilisation, which were laid for the human race in the river-beds of the Nile and the Euphrates.

In the Hebrew narrative, Israel is placed as the third with Egypt and Assyria, in the same way as Palestine lies about midway between the two river-beds, the Nile and Euphrates, where the earliest forms of civilisation are supposed to have arisen.

Now this Judæo-centric theory of history corresponds, as we have seen, to the geocentric theory of the Mosaic cosmogony. We have discarded the latter, and therefore should be able to get beyond the former without losing faith in a divine purpose running throughout the Mosaic narrative. Criticism calls out for some deeper as well as broader philosophy of history than that in which Bossuet drew up his baldly Biblical epitome of the relation of

sacred to secular history. Be it so: but this should not compel us, in the opposite extreme of reaction from priestcraft, to fritter away, as Voltaire and his school did, the world-wide significance of the call of Abraham and the exodus of Moses into mere local legends, swollen by national vanity and the arts of priestcraft. They are events of universal history, and we are constrained to see, as modern criticism is doing, that these two incidents were in truth the turning-points of the world's history. They were the protests of the spiritual, and so of the intellectual side of our nature against the two types of slavery to sense, of which Egypt and Assyria are the respective types. Criticism is thus coming on to see that the old distinctions of secular and profane history are alike shallow and misleading. Our conclusion, then, is that the new criticism is already getting touch, and seeing into the heart of the Mosaic narrative in a way which the hard negative school of last century little suspected. It will use its right of inquiring to the utmost, as science now does, on all questions of geology and astronomy, and in the end come back, as men of science do, to see that if the cosmogony was misleading the Theology of Genesis is as simple as it is sublime.

For this reason we cannot fall back upon some half-belief, such as that which contented the professional mind of Germany a century ago, when the Semlers and Eichhorns of that day caught up some of Lessing's manner without Lessing's spirit and genius. We dare not fall back on the compromises of the older and so-called Rationalist school, who took their stand on a kind of half-belief in inspiration and miracles. The divine element in the Book was so minimized in the old Rationalist scheme of interpretation, that it called for some quartz-crushing machine to extract the few grains

of gold in the mass of gravel or granite. In the same way they admitted that there were records of miracles in the old Book, but in most cases they were legendary additions to the narrative, which hung together quite as well without them as with them. The makeshifts and expedients of the older school of Rationalists to treat the Hebrew narrative as Euhemerus did the legendary age of Greek history, has gone the way of all such half-measures. Euhemerism, as it is called, has left its mark on the history of criticism and comparative religion, as the one mode of interpretation which is equally scouted by both sides. It only adds to the difficulties which it attempts to explain. Instead of turning the sea of fable into dry land of fact, it actually makes a marsh of these parts where we before had some kind of footing. Instead of throwing back the dividing line between legend and history, it leaves us more uncertain than ever as to what is fact and what is fiction. It is not by these expedients that the new criticism must be met. Indeed, the old Rationalism is so dead that Strauss' contemptuous contrast between the half and the whole may be said to have given it the happy despatch. It is only those in this country who wear German old-clothes, not knowing how out-of-date they are, who would trouble either to attack or defend the Bible on the lines of the old Rationalist school. Defence and attack on these lines are alike out of date.

What, then, is the new criticism, and what should be the attitude of the new Theology towards it? The answer is a simple one. Criticism must be left freely to take its course as much in sacred history as in secular, and it will be found that if its first issues are destructive, its second and final are reconstructive. We have seen this in every fresh history. We see an instance

of this in a public-school history of Greece, written only a few years ago, like that of Sir George Cox. It is a popular summary of the results of criticism, and yet could pass over the wars of the *Iliad* as wholly legendary. He notices only to pass it by, that "Thucydides has as little hesitation in assigning dates to events following close on the Trojan war, or to the successive settlements of non-Hellenic and Hellenic inhabitants of Sicily, as to the expulsion of the Peisistratidai from Athens, or the formations of the confederacy of Delos."[1] And now, since Schliemann's unexpected discovery of the actual site of Troy, a reaction in the other direction has set in. The world is now preparing, as it is always inclined, to pass from one extreme to the other. It is ready now to rush back almost into the arms of a credulous belief in the fables of childhood, as a few years ago it was to treat the Homeric legend and the authorship of the *Iliad* itself as wholly unhistorical. This may be a passing reaction towards conservatism, and to be distrusted, as all reactions justly are. But when all is said, there is a sense that there must be a substratum of solid truth in early history which subsequent discovery, as in the case of the cuneiform inscriptions and roll cylinders of Nineveh, confirms. We are thus suddenly ushered as if into a subterranean world of history which we never suspected as long as we moved over the surface of things. We are laying bare these buried cities, which the lava-flood of time has rolled over, and our recoveries are as much discoveries as Herculaneum and Pompeii were to the eighteenth century critics. The course of criticism is everywhere the same. Always, and to all time, there will be three ages of thought—first, the infancy of

[1] *A General History of Greece.* By Sir George Cox, M.A. Longmans. 1876.

uninquiring faith, then the youth of storm and stress, the upheaval of old beliefs, the calling out for something manly and rational to put in their place. But there is a third and last stage which we are entering on, alike in Hebrew, Greek, and Roman antiquities, of which the watchword is the same as that of the hero of the *Æneid*—

"Antiquam exquirite matrem."

In the old legend there is a kernel of truth which all the corrosive acid of criticism cannot dissolve into nothing. On the contrary, a reaction is setting in, as we have seen. It is clear that there is a kind of law in the descent of mortals from immortals through a descending scale of gods, demigods, heroes, chiefs, and warriors. It is the same law by which invariably the earliest rulers are king-priests, the Cohen of the Hebrews, the Archon of the Athenians, and the Rex-sacrificulus of the Romans. The law of differentiation, as Herbert Spencer calls it, leads in time to separation of functions formerly combined in one person. The king-priest becomes a consul and pontiff, and this perhaps explains the legend of the expulsion of the kings from Rome, and the aversion of the people even to the name of Rex. We see the same evolution or differentiation of functions, formerly combined in one, in the case of Israel, when the sons of Eli, the Cohen or king-priest, abused their power, as Tarquin did. We can understand why Samuel, though a priest himself, and reluctant as one of the ruling race to see the necessity for the change, nevertheless had to give way to the people's desire for a warrior-king in place of a priest-king. Now it confirms the truth of the legendary history of early Rome, when we find fact and fable mixed up together about seven kings, the earliest names of which, Romulus, Remus, Numa, Pompilius, are

clearly eponymic, but all explained by the same law of evolution in which the sacred and secular are differentiated as time goes on, and Church and State each takes its own course. This legendary history of Rome must have some truth; it is at least true to the law of the evolution of the secular out of a sacred. The legend of early kings, afterwards expelled, can be explained in no other way. But it is only since sociology has taken scientific shape as a branch of the general law of evolution that we begin to see what a solid residuum of truth there is in early Greek and Roman history, if we would only observingly distil it out, as has been said of other problems quite as perplexing as the rise of early institutions. There have been the same turns of opinion to Hebrew history as well. It has passed through the same three stages—1*st*, of uncritical acceptance throughout before any dividing line was drawn between fact and fable; 2*nd*, of the early critical spirit, when every document is passed through the fire, and the general impression is that the whole narrative is the invention of designing men to promote the ends of priestcraft; 3*rd*, the last stage of all, when negative criticism has done its worst, and there is a recovery of credit in the old records. This is the result of a closer study of the rise of early institutions, when it is seen that society has a law of evolution from sacred to secular which is the same everywhere, and of which Hebrew history is only the most remarkable instance. Whether we have reached the third stage of rehabilitation of the credit of the old Book as historical in the main, we may at least be reasonably certain of this, that the new critical standpoint is no longer the same as the old Rationalists. The *Tendenz-Kritik*, as it is called by the Tübingen school, has had its day, and like our little systems it has ceased to be. This tendency criticism sprang from a false concep-

tion of the factitious rise of early institutions, as if they were made instead of growing. This we now see to be unscientific ever since evolution has become the key-note of the new historical school. A century ago, when Rousseau based his *Contrat Sociale* on the famous but false aphorism that everywhere man is born free, but living in chains, it was assumed that laws and religion were alike the invention of kings and priests. But men forgot to ask the previous question, who invented kings and priests? This uncritical theory of the rise of early institutions, through positive enactment or contract, and as the artifice of kings and priests to enslave mankind, passed on to Theology, and men began to read into the Hebrew records the same prejudices and antipathies of the eighteenth century, the age of Illuminism, as it conceitedly called itself. As men were everywhere enslaved, it was thought that these chains were forged, not so much by their own traditional fears as by the cunning of the early race of world conquerors, the Nimrods and Pharaohs who set up as priests and kings. It was priestcraft which was everywhere the "enemy." Men saw or suspected conscious design where we only see a law of evolution. The reign of law had not extended its all-embracing sceptre over sociology, and so the conception grew that Moses was the mythical founder of actual institutions, but himself as unhistorical and as pragmatic as Manu, Lycurgus, Numa, and the other supposed "lawgivers" of mankind in early times. The conception of the rise of written law by evolution out of unwritten custom had not occurred to writers of the old Rationalist school. Such a work as Sir. H. Maine *On the Rise of Early Institutions*, could not have been written a century ago in the then state of knowledge. We can only look back and wonder at the ingenious efforts which writers then made to go wrong.

The *Tendenz-Kritik*, though its authors never saw or suspected the fact, are the legitimate descendants of Rousseau and his school. They forgot the true rise alike of tyranny and priestcraft, and they put the effect for the cause. Priests and priestcraft, as we now know, are possible only when a whole people renounce their rights and throw away the birthright, and with it the blessing of a walk by faith, such as that of Abraham and the patriarchs. Baur and his school could not or would not see this. Their intellectual defect was that of the age, for which they are only partially responsible, but we must add that they were spiritually blind to the real greatness of the heroes of Hebrew history. No more painful proof of this is seen than in Gesenius, the prince of verbal critics, but with no kind of insight into the genius of the race whose records he spent his life in deciphering. Ewald, who was a kind of one-eyed man, and so a king among the blind, seems to have seen farther. But he had not strength to shake off this *Tendenz-Kritik* temper. His piecing together of Deuteronomists of the first, second, and third degree of credibility is one of those portentous blowing of critical air-bladders which burst with their own emptiness, and which we now regard as learned trifling. This style of criticism is now so discredited in Germany, that we should only rattle dry bones without waking the dead, if we turned to the Rationalists of that day for either light or leading, on the problems which the new Theology must give some answer to. That problem is this, whether Mosaism was merely the outcome of some specific race peculiarity, called by Renan and others the Semitic instinct towards monotheism, or whether God spake by Moses. If the Hebrew monotheism can be explained by race peculiarity, we are at once reduced to the level of naturalism, and there is not only a philosophy of religion,

which no one desires to dispute, but also a purely natural explanation of what we call revelation. That God spake to the fathers by the prophets is the old explanation. The new scientific account of it is that religion so called rose by slow stages of evolution out of fetishism into polytheism and so up to monotheism. This monotheism in its turn is bound to be sublimated away into humanitarianism, and end in the cult of a certain *déesse* which is only deified self-hood, and the last substitute for personal immortality. Now criticism should have something to say about these two theories. It is on the answer of criticism that the course of the Theology of the future will depend. We should only waste our time by crossing swords with any lesser theory than that of entire humanitarianism. The naturalists of the Leyden school, Kuenen and others, who desire to retain some sense of a spiritual and divine element in Mosaism, but who refuse to trace it up to that one historical kernel of the whole matter, the call of Abraham, seem to us to labour under a twofold inconsistency. They are neither complete scientists, nor do they stand with their feet firm on the primitive ground, that God spake to the fathers by the prophets. Like all middle theories, they labour under the difficulties of both, without the compensating advantages of either.

As we think, the new criticism is bound to take account of this new rehabilitation of Bible characters which, when negative criticism was at its height, were held to be utterly unhistorical. Chief of these we should put the character of Abraham. The critic who, like Goldzieher, regards Abraham as a form of the sun-myth, and the sacrifice of Isaac as another variety of the Isis and Osiris legend, deserves no answer but to be treated as the uncritical survival of a mode of thinking completely out of date in our day. We have not returned, nor is it

possible we ever should return, to the age of childish faith in supernaturalism *eo nomine*, but the third and last stage of criticism will be more like the first than it is to the second. It will be constructive and not merely destructive. It will build up and not merely pull down; in any case it will abandon that bad habit of seeing "tendencies of conscious deception" in every fresh throb of the spiritual life of humanity. This would-be criticism which sees in Abraham only an Arab Sheikh, the true Nomad, who broke loose from the restraints and false culture of the young civilisation of the East to get back to the shepherd life in Palestine—this heartless artificial way of reading into primitive history the complicated and far-fetched notions of modern society, is beginning to pall on us. We are weary of hearing of priests and prophets in Israel as championing rival tendencies, as if the High and the Broad Church schools of our day existed in Levitical times. In the same way Baur has harped on one string in his contrast between Petrinism and Paulinism in the early Church. We are inclined to say to the tendency school that it is time to give over attributing such petty personal motives to men who may have been fanatics and fools, but who were at least not as modish and given to whims as our egotistic and self-important modern professors are. Such excessive artificiality answers itself. Early ages did not act under such complex motives. Men were unconscious then, and were either storm-driven by passion in one extreme, or guided by the leading star of God's eye and counsel in the other extreme. In any case they did not invent institutions and draw up codes as Lycurgus and Solon were supposed to do. Hence their inspiration, if we believe in it at all, was of a different kind from that which Warburton described as the Divine Legation of

Moses. It was spiritual, intuitive, spontaneous. It was the light of God's favour falling on the enlightened conscience, and leading it up to say: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of Thee." This, in its essence, is the nature of the call of Abraham. It was not magical or external (here the new school leaves behind the old supernaturalists of the childish days of faith); but it was internal, and the outcome of some trait of character in Abraham, which was both nature and grace, and in fact their meeting-point. There is this in every conversion, that it is, if we only could see into the heart of things, the fruit of all that is best in our past, and the bud of all that is best in our future. The call of Abraham is in a sense pre-historical. Even the Exodus, although history has been said by Stanley to have been born on the night when Israel went out of Egypt, is anterior to the age of written documents. Still we can never admit that the life of Abraham is not historical. We must have little external sense of the contrast between fact and fable if we do not feel our feet planted on the solid ground of history, as we read of the wanderings of Abraham the Hebrew from his early home beyond the river to his grave in the burying-place of Machpelah.

We should only insult our reader's intelligence in attempting to prove this. One incident alone, the sacrifice of Isaac, would decide this. It is just the kind of temptation which would occur to such a character and at such an age of the world's history. Later, it would have been inconceivable for one reason, and earlier for another. No one less exalted than Abraham as the hero of faith could have felt such a temptation at all, and to no one less elevated would such a way of escape have been offered, when the spirit of self-sacrifice, seen in the

readiness to slay his son, had come to its climax. On the whole, then, the character of Abraham stands out as historical in the highest degree. The story of the sacrifice of Isaac could have been no afterthought of a later age, for human sacrifices are so abhorrent to the Mosaic law, and the later prophets so emphatically condemned such acts as Moloch-worship, that we can only see it to be a true incident which occurred in the very morning of the world's history. It carries, moreover, this internal evidence of its truth, that it has been a stumbling-block to criticism ever since. Those who regard it as a mistaken impulse akin to Moloch-worship miss the mark as much as the old interpreters in the opposite extreme did, who saw in it only a divine suggestion, typical of a higher sacrifice in the far-off future. It belongs to the age when it occurred, and is to be understood, as the late Professor Mozley, who was the acutest of critics, pointed out, by reference to the "ruling ideas" of that age. But our very misunderstanding of the sacrifice, arising from our having lost the key-thought of it in the forgotten ideas of a remote age, is a voucher for its not being an invention of any later age. It stands like some shapeless monument of the past, with Runic characters scarcely to be seen under the moss-covered stones, and which witnesses by its immense antiquity that it is part of an order of things which has long since passed out of mind. We make, then, the call of Abraham our point of departure, and desire to read the Bible and all its later manifestations of the religious life in the light of that one personal fact of the world's history. Theology sometimes speaks of dispensations and contrasts, as for convenience we may and must do, the patriarchal, the Mosaic, the prophetic, and other dispensations. But when we go to the heart of the matter, we find the whole of Jewish history, and further than

that, even the Gentile dispensation, all folded up in the call of Abraham. As the oak sleeps, germinally at least, in the acorn, so Jew and Gentile are alike called in the call of faithful Abraham, El Khalel, the friend of God. Even in the under-world there are echoes of its deep meaning. "Abraham's bosom" is to the pious Jew the deepest conception of the rest and reward laid up for them that love and serve God in this life.

On all grounds, then, the call of Abraham is the one fact whose deep significance cannot be overestimated. Not to understand this is to miss the keynote to all that follows. To see it in its true light is to understand all those contrasts between nature and grace, flesh and spirit, law and gospel, faith and works, which make up in one form or other nearly the whole of all the later teaching of the Bible. Now it is important to see that in one character-study we have an epitome of the whole Bible. We may safely say that if this is historical, all that follows is historical: again, that if this is legendary, we do not know where we can plant our feet.

The new criticism should bring to the study of the Bible some such temper as this. We have had too much of a different temper. The Mosaic narrative has been put on the rack by minds of an arithmetical turn like the late Bishop Colenso. Its discrepancies, contradictions, and other departures from verbal veracity have been laid bare, and then we are asked to say if with so many marks of interpolation it deserves to be considered as genuine, to say nothing of the higher claim to be inspired. Like its Master it is blindfolded, buffeted, and then bid to prophesy who smote it. The modern criticism, if it is wise, will leave the dead to bury their dead; it will give up defending the letter of the Bible on any mere theory of inspiration. Rationalists and

Literalists fought their fight; the laboured replies of the Hengstenbergs and Havernicks of a past age did good service in their day. They sat down with German seriousness to defend the book against its negative critics, who made out that if not an imposture, it was at least the outcome of priestcraft. The truth is, that attack and defence are here alike wrong. Both made the mistake of seeing the old world in the light of the modern. As an instance of the root mistake, both sides, from want of the true historical faculty, forgot that the Hebrew term for a book, "Sepher," was originally a stone-inscription. It connoted probably a totally different class of conceptions in an age when the pen was only a chisel, and such writing as existed at all was only hieratic, and reserved for the records of royal exploits. It is half-childish to use the one word "book" for both ancient and modern ideas of writing. As for our tests of authorship arising from identity of style, the use of certain set phrases, literary form, and all that makes up the apparatus of a modern critic, and by which he detects an imposture like those of Macpherson and Chatterton,—these are modern, not ancient tests. They are not only modern, but also tests which would never occur to an age earlier than printing, and when the fabrication of ancient MSS. was as out of the reach of a forger as to steal the crown jewels would be impossible in our day. It cannot be said that even the Great Synagogue, when it set its stamp on certain books as canonical, and others as deutero-canonical, seems to have proceeded on any fixed principle beyond that of language. Though so much nearer the prophetic age of Hebraism, even they had a modern way of looking at the problem. They made more of external than of internal tests. That certain odes and songs all contained in a single Sepher or roll of a book, were traditionally

named the Chazon or vision of Isaiah Ben-Amos was presumption enough for them. In an uncritical age *prima facie* evidence is enough. They had as little thought of two Isaiahs as of several authors of the Psalms or of the Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah wrote or probably copied. They would have thought it presumptuous to raise critical questions as to a first and a second Isaiah. Indeed, the difficulty did not press on them with the weight which it lays on us who have to fight the battle of a book religion. Even at a much later age, and when the art of writing and multiplying copies had made a great advance, we find in a simple society such as that of Islam the same confusion about the order of the Surahs or chapters of Mahomet's Koran. The prophet left these scraps of revelation scattered as Sibylline leaves to the wind. To collect them and set them in their true order is a task which almost defies later criticism. But what of that? No one doubts the genuineness of the scattered leaves of Mahomet's mind; and as his is a book religion quite as much as ours, his followers are known everywhere among uncivilised tribes in the interior of Africa as "men of the book." We see in this instance how small the difficulty is if looked at in the true light.

The new criticism, then, will leave on one side these questions on which a past generation fought such battles in the air as to the genuineness and authenticity of certain truths in the Hebrew Canon. It will confine itself, if it is wise, to two questions, and only two.

1. Is the narrative on the whole historical, for which the tests are the usual ones, viz. self-consistency and the corroboration of other testimony, such as travellers and antiquarians?

2. There is beyond this the spiritual test. The Bible

is a revelation of God's good-will to man. In this good-will there is an increasing purpose running through it. The best summary of what that is, is found in the preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read that the same God who spake little by little and in a variety of ways to the fathers through prophets, has in the last dispensation of all spoken to us by a Son. This is the increasing purpose of revelation. In this sense the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, and to fail to see this is to miss the meaning of the whole. The fact is, harsh as it may sound, the Bible is a sealed book to all who are unspiritual. It is only to purged eyes that it opens up its meaning at all. Take such a narrative as Jacob wrestling at Peniel till the breaking of the day. Is this allegory or fact, or are we on the higher ground on which a fact of sense has no meaning at all unless seen as symbolic of the higher world? In this point of view there is a meaning in those lines—

> "When love interprets what the eye discerns,
> When mind discovers what is truly meant,
> When grace improves what man from nature learns,
> Each sight and sound becomes a sacrament."

The criticism of the future will have to work up to this level, in which the mystical and the Rationalist, who are the extreme Right and Left of modern exegesis, shall meet and form a higher unity. Under the electric current two diverse gases combine to produce water, but the force which brings them into combination is itself a new thing, a spiritual or a dynamic fact (if you like that word better), without which the universe would become the chaos of which poets feign that it arose. It is the same with the new criticism. It must combine in it all that is best in the Rationalists, the Allegorists, and

Mystics. Each of these schools of itself is sterile and barren. The Mystics, as we see in Swedenborg and his followers, go off into the cloudland of endless subtleties, in which the thread of the historical narrative is hopelessly broken. Down to the bedstead, for instance, of Og the king of Bashan, which was in Rabbah, nothing is too insignificant on which to hang a cobweb of allegorizing criticism. This vein of allegorizing, in which Patristic, Scholastic, and to some extent Puritan divines all took part, showed how much ingenuity could be wasted to no useful purpose. It is now out of date with all but the followers of Swedenborg. But extremes touch in our day, when the Rationalist who handles the Bible like any other book, and the allegorizing divine who handles it as we never should any other book, are often found in the same camp.

The explanation of this apparent inconsistency is, that the old historical faith in the old Book has fallen through, and apparently we have nothing to put in its place. When Niebuhr made a clean sweep of early Roman history, it was not to be expected that Hebrew would escape the corrosive acid of general scepticism in all ancient history. We have now to see whether, the negative school having done its worst, we have anything positive to put in its stead. The spirit of negation, that *Geist der stets verneint* of the modern Mephistopheles, has now run its course, and the reaction in favour of finding a residuum at least of what is historical in early records has set in. The Theology of the future is bound to avail itself of this reaction, and to point out certain historical landmarks which no deluge of negative criticism has or can submerge. We have glanced at the one which seems most prominent of all in the call of Abraham; but there are others in the sojourn of Israel in Egypt

quite as important, and on which contemporary history throws much side light. The details of all this we leave to those specialists who set up often on a very slender, critical apparatus as Egyptologists. But whatever the amount of side light thus brought in to confirm the historical veracity of the early books which go by the name of books of Moses, we must get on to a point of view in which questions of mere authorship sink into the background. It raises a smile to note the readiness of divines of the old school to assign the first five books to the penmanship of Moses. Then, as we are told, Joshua became the autobiographer of his own exploits, and then Samuel, Gad, and Nathan are called sometimes as eponymous, but more often as pseudonymous, authors of certain "books" which probably never existed as separate written records at all till centuries after. Much of this modern antique way of looking at early history has passed away; but too much of it remains. As long as it lingers on as the base and substratum of what is known as the popular Theology, we shall have Colensos to undo the good that Maurice has done in deepening our faith in the Bible, as a real record of the deepening relations of the living God with living man. The writer of the work is probably only one of many who are ready to look on Maurice's "prophets and kings of the Old Testament" as doing much to deepen their faith and to restore the old book to its position for credibility, from which it had been rudely shaken down by the blind zeal of dogmatists and sceptics, the attack and defence of which were alike wide of the mark. It will not be easy to lead on the popular mind from one standpoint to another. But it must be done if we are not to make shipwreck of faith altogether. Sunday-school teaching is responsible for much unintelligent iteration of old and

new exploded views of the Bible as minutely accurate in all its details. The fear that it should be found out to be not minutely accurate in all its details, seems to haunt the crass and uncritical mind of the average Sunday-school teacher as a kind of evil dream sent from Germany, which is supposed to be the land of theological dreamers. The average Sunday-school teacher is not educated enough to turn round on the critics of the Colenso type and to say, "You are perfectly right, but what then?" Such teachers need a helping hand to be led on to a higher faith; and if sermons like those of the late F. D. Maurice on the Old Testament could be popularized, the evil would be met better than in any way we can think of. It is unfortunate that no writer with a popular style, and who would strike the mind of the average reader, has as yet turned his attention to this subject of lifting the popular Theology off from the old ground of an infallible Book to the new level which criticism must take in the future if it does not make forfeit of its name as criticism. A writer like the late Charles Kingsley might have done it, if he had been more of a divine and less of an artist and poet. But the writer will arise, and the need that is felt for such a constructive critic may perhaps lead some one to come forward and at least make the attempt.

In any case our course is clear. The new Theology can only build up a system on the foundations of the new criticism. It can never go back, it must only go forward. It must set aside the old scribe theory of inspiration root and branch, and treat the question of the authorship of the books of the Old and New Testament as an open one. It must go farther; and while it admits that in historical times, such as the Christian Church grew up in, we have some data for determining

the authorship of Epistles and Gospels, and so for deciding their authority with their authenticity, it is otherwise with the books of the Old Testament. Nay more, we must go farther, and admit that those records mount up to ages of such vast antiquity that it is as uncritical to speak of the Mosaic authorship of certain books as to speak of the codes of Lycurgus and Solon. This uncritical view of Greek history passed away with our grandfathers, who in most cases took their ideas of early Greek and Roman history from such an uncritical source as Plutarch. We should not think much of the scholarship which professed to set out in our day with this gossiping old Bœotian as its guide through the mazes of early Greek myth and fable. It is the same with Hebrew antiquities. We can hold on the one hand the historical reality of such a leader as Moses without going to the extreme of holding the traditional view of his authorship of certain books which pass by his name. There is no need to hold either extreme. The midway view which, unless we are mistaken, the criticism of the future will take up is this, that God spake to the fathers by the prophets. Inspiration which is only revelation in fact, as revelation is inspiration in idea, is the continuous process by which Israel as the covenant people rose to the full consciousness of the Messianic idea. This was effected in "sundry times and in divers manners," as we render it: the real meaning of which phrase is, that by many types, each and all varied and intricate, and by the scattered hints of prophecy which in every case sprang out of some temporal incident in the prophet's life, there grew up the Messianic thought of One who was a prophet greater than Moses, and a Son of David seated on a throne greater than that of Solomon. This is the only conception of inspiration which meets all the facts of the

case. Israel, as the covenant people, carried inspiration in it potentially. This latent spark of God-consciousness rose and dwindled, and in prophetism was more or less irregular; it blazed out as the occasion called for it. In this way, as one religious reformer arose after another, they came to be recognised as prophets. At first the prophet was only a *Roeh*, or seer; afterwards he became the *Nabi*, or prophetic teacher proper. As for this contrast between Roeh and Nabi, the simple and common-sense explanation is the obvious one, that the term Roeh, or seer, carries us back to the time when all prophetic communications were limited to those by vision, or in some symbolic act. The Nabi, or later type of prophet, marks the age of written communications, as Jeremiah is distinctly said to have made his. It is probable that Isaiah's visions were of both kinds, as he lived about the transition time, when the simpler form of sight visions or of oracular utterances began to give way to written forms of prophetism. Isaiah's were in all probability only visions, and afterwards transcribed, just as the Rhapsodists of early Greece, not excepting Homer, passed on their epics to be polished and put into literary form by the critics of a later age. The scribe theory of inspiration is in fact quite a late one among the covenant people; but it illustrates how, from want of the historic faculty, we are disposed to judge the past by the present, and are unable to see that they had any other standards of literary form than these which we bow down to in our day. In Mahomet's time the idea of a book religion was so familiar to the world, that it seemed incredible that a religion could take its rise in any other way. Accordingly, we read in the 4th Sura of the Koran, "Whosoever believeth not in God, and His angels, and His books, and His Apostles, and in the Last Day, he verily hath erred with far-

gone error." Thus, of the five articles on which his religion rests, the book and its messenger are two of the five.

This is quite the modern way of looking at inspiration; but between Moses and Mahomet there rolls a gulf of two thousand years, and we do not cross this by repeating uncritical phrases about all religions taking their rise in a book revelation. For our part, we prefer to use the phrase, vague as it sounds of the spiritual consciousness of the covenant people, "In Jewry is God known; His name is great in Israel." If the covenant means anything, it means a good deal more than a bare promise, barren of fulfilment till the birth of Christianity and the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. That the Holy Ghost as Christ Himself was in a sense with the Church in the wilderness we are bound to hold, unless we suppose, as too many do, that the Old Testament is the dispensation of the Father, and so is distinct from that of the Son, which in its turn is distinct from that of the Spirit. Discarding such crudities, which have only to be named to be scouted as heresies, we hold that the Spirit was with the Church of the Old Testament as well as with that of the New Testament. The difference is only one of degree, as explained by the apostle in his well-known contrast between the time of spiritual childhood with the law as our pedagogue, and that of maturity, when Christ is our only schoolmaster.

This being so, we hold that the scribe theory of inspiration must give way to that of the continuous education of Israel and of a succession of great teachers known as prophets, — the series beginning at Moses and ending with Malachi. A book is too impersonal for us to trace in it the first channel of communication between God's Spirit and man. It may be the record of how that communication was kept up; in this sense the

Church party are right, though we are not sure that their theory, in its turn of teaching by Church authority, does not also break down under difficulties of its own. In truth, neither the Protestant nor the Catholic theory of religion quite explains all the facts of the case. Each is one-sided, and is only true in so far as it is a negation of the errors of the opposite theory. The true theory, as no one has seen better than Maurice, is that God being spirit and the living source of all inspiration in man, can so communicate with man in and through the open door of conscience. In this way man is, as Hegel taught, the point of identity between the finite and the Infinite. We need not be Hegelians to see that by his composite nature, man is intended to be the true meeting-point between sense and spirit, time and eternity. We have thus the philosophical ground of the incarnation in the thought that in man the Infinite could so unite Himself to the finite. It is only what we may expect that a Son of man is revealed as the covenant meeting-point of God and man. This is the root-idea of that Messiahship which seems to run like a golden thread through the whole Bible, from the first page to the last. The seed of the woman, the promised child of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of man, of Daniel's visions, all point to the same thought of God in union with man through the God-man. Instead of the bald phrase, the Theophany, which the old Theology called in to explain such strange incidents as those of Melchizedek and the Captain of the Lord's host appearing to Joshua, it would be more in harmony with our conceptions of the covenant people to see in these the normal, not the exceptional and half magical modes of Jehovah drawing near to man. We live in an age when, as one of our poets has said, 'tis little gain to think that heaven is far off and beyond the tree-top of our

boyhood, and so we conclude that God was near the primeval world as He would be near us, if we would not put certain cold abstractions of Deism between us and our loving Father in heaven.

For these reasons we conclude that Israel, as the covenant people, received a revelation in and through the enlightened conscience of the spiritual heroes who were then called prophets, and whom we now describe in modern phrase as inspired men. That they were men of the book, and penned what the Spirit breathed into them, is the mere sequel of the story; but as this is the last in a long link of providential preparations for the Messiah, it strikes us as the most important. But this modern antique idea of a book religion must be got rid of, and if negative criticism has done nothing more, it has made it impossible for critics who are not men of a dead past. The future lies with the school who seek inspiration in the Church or collective idea of Israel as a whole. The covenant people had a genius for true worship, as the Greeks had a genius for art and the Romans for government. Did the Elizabethan age make Shakespeare, or did Shakespeare make the Elizabethan age? Undoubtedly the former; the man is the product of the age, though as its last and highest expression he certainly acts and reacts on his age. So with Israel and her prophets. Even if the call was internal and divine, it was only possible for a prophet to discharge the office of a prophet within the pale of the covenant. The criticism which sees this will have the privilege of moulding the Theology of the future. How important this is it is impossible to say. In any case, we cannot overestimate it. The age has fallen into cold Agnosticism because it has lost the faith of childhood, and we have nothing to put in the place either of inspiration or miracle. The

old belief in a book religion is past, going the way of the still older belief in a Church religion. We are in the position of the Humanists' age before Luther, who, protesting against the Church, had nothing to put in its place. We have reached a crisis, then, with the falling through of the old supports of faith in authority, and must seek a revival of faith by setting it on surer foundations. After giving up the credit of the book as an infallible authority on the scientific side, the popular theology has clung obstinately to the belief in its inspiration as a historical record. And now that we are called on to give this up, we are asked what is there left to contend for? Our answer is, that when the documentary details of the Bible, as well as its scientific accuracy, is surrendered, there is still that spiritual element—the voice of God to the conscience, and which is the "word of God" as contained in the sacred canon. That "word of God" is, as all spiritual minds see, the sharp two-edged sword which sleeps in its scabbard of the text, like the sword of Goliath wrapped in the priest's ephod till it is drawn and wielded by the hand of faith. Then it glitters in almost every page, and pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. Then those who came within the "whiff and wind of this fell sword" feel that it is critical—a discerner, as we render it, of the thoughts and intents of the heart. In sitting down to read the word of God, many have found to their surprise that it is the word of God that is reading them through, when at the very time they thought they were only reading some dry and musty records of a dead history of a long dispersed Jewish people. In the prophets and psalms this "word of God," or Bible within the Bible, seems to gleam as stars do in the milky way, which are too thickly strewn to be

seen as separate stars, and create the sense of one unbroken blaze or rather haze of light. But even in the other books, as in other parts of the sky, though the stars are not so thickly sown, there are "lessons" to be learned—if we like to use such a term—even from the long records of the crimes and follies of Jewish kings and courts. The Old Testament is a vast lectionary of political and social philosophical history: they are the warnings of a wise and loving teacher, not the cynical comments of a Mephistopheles. When we discard the mechanical view of inspiration, which could set the Book of Chronicles on a level with St. John's Gospel because both are bound up between the covers of the Book all of which is canonical, there still remains another and better theory of inspiration. We can fall back on Luther's test, which was thought too subjective for a later age of Literalists, *ob sie Christum treiben* (such is the force of *treiben*, which is our drive and drift), the unexpected surprise of finding Messianic and spiritual thoughts in books so special and limited in their interest as Kings and Chronicles; this is the view of inspiration of which later criticism will recognise the reasonableness, and which the New Theology may accordingly stand on. We have therefore, in laying down the lines of the Theology of the future, deliberately placed the question of the canon of inspiration as last, not first, on the list of truths to be restated. All the Reformation confessions set out, as the XXXIX Articles of the English Church and the Westminster Confession of the Scotch Church do, with a formal acceptance of the canonical Books as a basis to be laid preliminary to the discussion of Theology. We prefer to reverse the process, for the reason seen above, and experience shows that our method is the only safe one. The canon is, after all, only the string which ties cut flowers together, and is a

proof that the formative age of inspiration is over. It is the modern mode of treating a book as a dead thing; it is the polished shell we put on our shelf, from which the life has gone, and from which echoes only pass of that sea-shore from which it was taken, perhaps, ages ago. We moderns have somewhat weakened our perception of the spiritual and self-evidencing force of truth by laying too much stress on the intellectual side of religion. We apply in this age of printing the wrong tests by which to discern it, and we put the eye before the ear as the organ of spiritual perception. To the ancients, *ὑπακοή*, or obedience, literally meant the bending the ear down to the earth, as the slave does to catch his master's whisper; this was their symbol of the obedience of faith. We have lost this prostrate attitude, and prefer with bent brow and critical eye to pore over a document, and so to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. Both eye and ear are no doubt adapted to become channels for divine communication, but the ear is the better of the two. All instruction, to be complete, must be catechetical, for without a stage of discipleship by attending on the footsteps of a teacher there is no higher initiation into the company of those who know not by book-lore only, but by the inward touch of truth; when we shall have grasped this, we shall take a new departure in our view of the Book and its contents. What at first will seem a loss, will turn out to be a gain. Instead of putting duodecimo gilt-edged Bibles in invisible type into children's hands, and assuming, as indolent traditional Protestants do, that they are now Christians armed at all points, we shall learn the lesson we are intended to learn from our rivals the Romanists. We shall try to conquer the world, as Loyola and Xavier did, by personal love and sacrifice, since as often as men work with these

weapons they succeed. But in doing so we shall understand the Book itself better than we ever did before. The prophets who were touched with a live coal from off the altar of sacrifice will then become living men to us: this is what Sir Edward Strachey has pointed out in his lessons on Isaiah, in which the politician has a deeper insight than the theologian. We shall then be no longer scandalized at the question whether there was one Isaiah or two of the same name. This is a not unlikely hypothesis to those who know how impersonally names are used, and pass from one to another as titles of honour in the Old Testament. We shall thus in this way see the Bible to be the living record of a living Church in the past, and this will lead us on to ask whether we, as living men, have any lively oracles to compare with these lively oracles of old. Are there no prophets in our day, no evangelists, no martyrs? It rebukes our scribe religion of a dead past with its Bibliolatries and Hierolatries, that we have even to ask such a question. Is not the name of Thomas Erskine that of a prophet to some? and are not names like Moffat and Livingstone names which make us feel that there are evangelists in our day? To these we may add a noble army of martyrs, not only among missionaries abroad, but also among philanthropists like Howard, Fry, and others who were spent in the service. On these grounds we conclude that the new Theology has nothing to lose but much to gain from the new criticism, and when the destructive age of the old criticism has said its last word, it is only to remove the rubbish of the old dogmatism and raise a fairer temple of the new faith in its stead.

The conclusion, then, that we come to with regard to the new Theology and the new criticism amounts to *laissez-nous-faire* on both sides. It is impossible to say

what final settlement criticism may arrive at with regard to the authority of the documents on which early Hebrew history rests. Released from the repressive weight or the salutary restraint of authority, as the two sides respectively regard it, criticism will take its own course, blind and deaf alike to remonstrances on both sides. The new criticism is destructive of old dogmatisms, but also, to a large extent, it will be reconstructive. What residuum of historical truth will remain, after all that is legendary has been eaten away by the corrosive acid of criticism, we are unable to say. All that we here contend for is that the residuum will be far more precious and rich in spiritual ore than either side is willing to admit. It may be that the word of God within the word of God will come out like silver purified seven times from the fire. What that "word of God" is, which the Bible as a whole is said to "contain," it will then be for the new Theology to say. At present it is premature to say more than this, that a philosophy of history has not as yet been reached, though there have been many attempts by a line of writers, extending over three centuries, from Bodin to Buckle. Hence it is not to be expected that we are able to produce a philosophy of the Bible, for it is a book in which, as Max Müller well observes, there is the mystery of all mysteries, as well as the history of histories.[1] This being so, we must wait for the results of the higher criticism, till we know the exact place and importance of Israel in a scheme of universal history. This relation of the Bible to history will certainly be different from the position of Bossuet on one hand and of Voltaire on the other, the two poles between which the two sections of critics oscillate to this day. A century ago, and to a great extent even to our

[1] *Contemporary Review*, October 1882.

day, orthodox and unbelievers alike see the Bible through the coloured glasses of theological prejudice. In an age to which the supernatural was either all true or all false, when the sun either stood still or it did not over the valley of Gibeon at Joshua's word, it was impossible to say what was the meaning of this or any other legend of early Jewish history. The time has not come even yet for getting at the philosophy of the Bible. But it is fast approaching, and we begin to see the landmarks of a new age emerging out of the deep of Rationalism. The old Testament exegesis of Germany has not attempted to solve this controversy.

When this has made good its claim to be regarded as the new criticism, it will be possible for the new Theology to say what its interpretation of the Old Testament is to be. At present it may be said that exegesis is in a chaotic state of transition, of which such a commentary as the "Speaker's" is not an inapt index. The real difficulties are prudently shelved and passed over with the safe remark, that if we had all the facts of the case before us, we should probably see the true solution. As it is, the exegete slips the knot of the difficulty, or passes it over with a few judicious remarks which leave the unpleasant sense of reserve in the mind of the "intelligent layman" of the Speaker type, for whom this commentary was professedly written. As a reply to the negative school of Germany this old orthodox standpoint satisfies no one: it is felt to be a mere transition point of view, and as such doomed to pass away. The sentence under which it is doomed to die is summed up in the lines—

> "Come back, come back! and wherefore, and for what?
> To idly finger some old Gordian knot,
> Too weak to unravel and too faint to cleave,
> And idly clinging to some make-believe."

Such is the interim position taken up by orthodox English scholarship, and it can have only one issue. "After me the deluge" is all that divines of the Speaker's Commentary school can say of their labours. There is no quickening breath of the philosophy of history in their dry and pragmatic account of the story of the judges and kings of Israel. If there were, perhaps they might see that faith and fanaticism run into each other and form strange combinations, and that much which we baldly call the supernatural is only human nature working under exceptional conditions, and under the mighty inspiring influx of God's Spirit, which is the inspiration of the Almighty, and the secret of all that is great and heroic in man. In this sense the story of the Maid of Arc and of Sampson might be read, for instance, side by side. We glance at this only to note defects, not to suggest the remedy. In any case, the future is with a criticism which, beginning as destructive, becomes constructive, which sees "God in history," and His Spirit moving over the face of the waters on ways to us past finding out. When this broader view of inspiration and this deeper view of faith shall have ceased to be regarded as mere catchwords of a few divines of the intuitional school, we may hope that there will be room for the new criticism, and that with it the new Theology shall build up an exegesis of the Old Testament against which modern unbelief will direct its assaults in vain.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

We have thus briefly surveyed the whole field of Theology, and pointed out some of the leading contrasts between the old and the new. The changes which the age calls for arise from its changed conceptions in other regions of thought besides Theology. We have pointed out that in every age of the world there are certain "ruling ideas" which are the common stock and property of all men, as much as the air they breathe and the water they drink. These "ruling ideas" are part of its common consciousness. The age does not possess them, but instead they may be said to possess the age. This is why we call them "ruling ideas." They may be fallacies, and even commonplaces, as many of the ruling ideas of the French sentimentalists were, who together make the age of Rousseau and Voltaire, and which spoke in the seven thunders of the French Revolution as soon as thought had leaped forth to wed with fact. So, again, the ideas of the age of the Crusades may seem to us extravagant and chimerical, but they ruled that age with a rod of iron. This tyranny of one master idea, which masters us when we least suspect it, is strikingly seen in the case of Dante. Up to middle age he was a fierce political partisan, and by nature the farthest removed from a mystic. Yet such was the

mastery of Theology over his age and himself, that he was compelled, in spite of himself, to throw his fierce passions and political partisanships into a theological crucible, and there melt them up and bring them out as transformed as the rings and earrings of the Israelites were into the mould of the golden calf. Quite as strange is the theological mould of his poem, which to us seems so artificial, that we have to give it in many cases an allegorical meaning. This is the *crux* of the commentators, that we scarcely know when Dante is stating his real belief and when he is allegorizing. Much of our enjoyment of that weird comedy of hell arises from the sense of its being the tragedy of Dante's own life of exile turned into a wail of woe from the eternal world. The poem gathers calm as it goes on from hell to heaven through purgatory, much as Dante himself settled down to his fate. But the true key to the poem is the mastery of the ruling ideas of his age, which were intensely theological, over a mind in the opposite extreme, which was intensely political. Hence the strange amalgam of such contradictory ideas. Dante was a preacher to the times, as Knox and many of the early Puritans were, who took texts from the Old Testament to thunder at the Jezebels and Athaliahs of their day. They produced the same unnatural compound as Dante's so-called comedy, in which politics and Theology are fused into one in the fire of an absorbing enthusiasm.

To understand an age, then, we must know its ruling ideas. They are to it what a young man's ideals or castles in the air are to his future life. Such is their strength, that a shrewd judge of character has said, "Tell me what a young man's castles in the air are, and I will tell you what he will be." It is the same with an age. Its Theology, its politics, its law, even its exact science,

which is the last of all to feel this breath of speculation, are all affected by what we may call its *prima philosophia*. To assume, then, that the Theology of the age of the Crusades, of the Reformation, or of the Puritan movement, can be made to fit the age we now live in, is only what a very stupid or a very ignorant man would do; it is to take a dull and pedantic view of Theology. We may smile at the worse than useless attempt of Church teachers to put the fresh young wine of this year's vintage into the shrivelled skins of last year's. But such attempts to revive the past, or even to conserve it rigidly in one unbending external type, not only fail; they carry discouragement with them to others who have the same cause at heart, but who would not stake the battle in the same way on a single combat. Believers who are not formalists always suffer when those who are only formalists—or little more—set up as champions of the faith against the world-power, whether in science, politics, or other directions in which new light is streaming in on the age, and this new light is formulating itself in new ideas. Too often the ark of God is taken, and the cause of God seems to suffer.

For this reason we hold that the ruling ideas of every age must be understood by those who undertake to draw up its Theology. The trained theologian, as a rule, is defective, on account of the narrowing effect on his temper of the truths he deals with: hence he has ever to be on his guard lest he should let the statement of his own convictions betray him into a dogmatic temper to others. But his chief danger arises from his want of outlook into what is going on in other departments of thought. He is therefore the last to see that each age has its own *Zeit Geist*. Indeed, he thinks it a point of honour to do battle against the spirit of the age. He denounces

it as worldliness, but he forgets that the mere opposite to worldliness is only other-worldliness, and that the worst secularist is the ecclesiastic who tries to chain the age to the past. He is like a case-lawyer who, having mastered the dry technicalities of the old practice, cannot understand the call for law reform. On the contrary, he opposes, with the instinct of self-preservation, the simplification of technicalities. He is no leveller of barriers between the professional and the non-professional classes. This is the priestism of all professions. To suppose Theology to be specially exempted from this Magism would be to suppose a continued miracle of interposition by the Head of the Church, which He is not pleased to grant. We must, then, take the world and also the Church as we find them. We shall not better either by setting the one against the other, or by taking up either cause in a spirit of blind partisanship. Too much theological writing is pitched in this key, and is for this reason simply out of date. Theology fossilizes sooner than any other studies, and chiefly for this reason, that it almost always sets its golden age of the Church, its so-called age of faith, in the past, not in the future. The archaic mould of thought, sometimes even of language, is an indication that the majority of divines have only a feeble conception of the inner harmony of reason and faith. These two, rightly considered, are only different names for the same faculty, which is the power of transcending sense-perception and of transforming concepts of the bare understanding into those of that higher intelligence which is God-like, and which deals with immutable truth of which mathematical and moral concepts are the readiest illustrations.

If we have made out our case, we have so far cleared the ground on which to lay the foundations for a

Theology of the future. We have boldly met the dogmatism of divines with a counter-dogma, which is this, that a new age with a new class of ruling ideas calls for a new Theology. The senseless conservatism of the outer form or wrappage of truth when its inner spirit is changed; this is, as Bacon pointed out, only the cause of still more revolutionary changes. To harmonize outer and inner, and to take care that "as this temple waxes, the inward service of the mind and soul grows wide withal;" this is wisdom, which, as a rule, is beyond the range of the professional divine. He has to be educated as political parties are by their chiefs, and so has to learn from defeat, and in the cold shade of opposition, lessons which the sunshine of success never taught him. Hence the dry, dogmatic divine, like the reactionary politician, has to let schisms deepen into heresies. He must look on helplessly and bleat his cry of "the Church in danger," while neglected truths, church-outed from the camp of orthodoxy, come back like Coriolanus from Veii to Rome; and then he makes his submission, and admits that these heresies are often the disguised form of despised and rejected spiritual truths. Our political conservatism is the measure exactly neither more nor less of our ecclesiastical. We had to lose the brightest jewel in the British crown before we could see that colonies are not to be treated as draw-farms. We are now erring in the opposite extreme, and for fear of repeating the folly of the Grenvilles and Norths of unhappy memory, we are regarding our colonists as so many step-children, whom we may neither advise nor cherish. It is much the same with our treatment of theological truths. If they cannot be drawn up and defined on one archaic pattern of the past, then it is denounced as no Theology at all. Dogmatism passing

rapidly into doubt and despair, this is the temper of the age; and for this agnostic indifference, Church teachers are responsible more than any class. The popular divine of our day is a broad High-Churchman, who proclaims very definite dogmas as he moves in one circle of society, but who becomes quite hazy and comprehensive as soon as he passes out among the people. Is it strange that under this class of teaching the age should be ready to slide into that worst form of scepticism, the conservatism of the outer, when the heart of belief is eaten out of the inner?

For this disease of dogmatism as degenerating into scepticism, and halting at conformity as a half-way house, there is only one remedy, which lies in plain speaking. The age must be told what its popular organs, alike in the press and the pulpit, do not tell it; that with all its sham attempts to galvanize a dead past, it has lost the faith alike of the age of Dante and Milton. Its boasted Individualism is only that poor and dwarfed doctrine of "self-help," or the new gospel of the self-made man of the money-market type. Those kings of industry, as we call them, are as a rule ignorant, and therefore timid in all directions but that of their own kind of business. Hence, when they give their money to build churches and endow new chairs of Theology, they indulge the pleasing delusion that they have found defenders of the faith who will act as barriers against unbelief. But too late we shall see that it will be with us as with the men before the flood, "They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, until"—and probably there were orthodox Agnostics of that day who said "it will last my time," "after me the deluge." This is God's way of writing *finis* to a chapter of history in which the outer form is put above the inner spirit.

If we do not care to raise Cassandra cries all in vain, it is because we do not think it too late even yet to put Theology right with the age. But it must be done in terms which the age will listen to. The "ruling ideas" of our day and not those of the past must be the condition of the new concordat. What these are we have now to describe, or rather to summarize what we have already written. In the first place, the age has profoundly modified its conceptions of the relations of God to the universe. The "First Cause" and the "Supreme Being,"—these were the phrases which satisfied the age of Deism. It no longer satisfies ours. Either there is nothing behind phenomena but the law or order of their sequence, which is itself only a mathematical formula, and has no more entity than the binomial theorem, and of which we can report nothing but that this sequence exists, or else this law and order is itself a kind of *Welt-wille*, as Schopenhauer conceived of it,—the *wille* becoming *Vorstellung*, or manifestation, and coming up to consciousness in man as we mount up the successive stages of life. To meet this new form of scientific Agnosticism we must change front. We must begin at the other end of the series, with man, and take him as our point of departure. New Theology, in a word, must set out with a psychological affirmation. We are conscious of will or causation, and, at the same time, profoundly conscious that our wills are finite and limited, and hence the outcome of a Supreme will. This is the old ontological argument, but based on new grounds in psychology. As for the old Deism of last century, which professed belief in a God who governs by general laws, and who is Himself transcendent over nature and is its First Cause, that has fallen through. Instead of that, we must incline to the view once regarded as pantheistic, and hold the belief in

a God who is immanent in and through nature. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men: this text must be our keynote. The old Theology read that deep reference to the Logos in the light of a solitary dogma—the pre-existence of Christ as the second Person of the Trinity. But the Deism of later days soon took all meaning out of this phrase,—the Logos,—and rationalized it down to a mere abstraction, and so we have to reconstruct Theology in this respect on a new basis. The Deistic foundation having failed, we must look out for some new supports which shall be at once more scientific and more spiritual. Nor need we look in vain. With the authors of the "unseen universe" we may hold a scientific conception of the universe, which shall also be more spiritual. What we sometimes describe as matter is only a manifestation of mind, or at least of force, which is, strictly speaking, a mental concept. The earth we walk on is one vast electric battery energized probably from the sun, but in its turn setting up new forces which—as light, heat, motion, life—are constantly changing the appearance of things. This is the old psalmist's account of things. We call it pre-scientific; but it is spiritual, and is the point which the new science is working up to. "Thou renewest the face of the earth;" "Thou takest away their breath, and they die;" "if He do but touch the mountains, they smoke." This is anti-Materialism in its most pronounced form; and the new science, like the new Theology, is anti-Materialist. It knows nothing of the old dualism of mind and matter on which the Deism of the past constructed a *Deus Opifex*. Monism, or "one God, one law, one element,"—this is the Theology, as clearly as it is the science, of the future. On this point a new note must be struck, and the old defences and outworks of revealed religion be taken away,

as the old lunettes and bastions of those fortifications which are now out of date.

Passing on from the Being of God to His Fatherhood, we note the next point of departure of the new Theology. It is not enough to recognise, as all are now disposed to do, the fatherly character of God. There is this kind of compromise between the old and the new which is in the air, and which seems quite a proper concession to make on the part of divines who are quite prepared to take a leaden mediocrity when they cannot get a golden. God, we are told, is the Maker and Judge of all men; but He is the Father only of those who believe. In this sense the old high Calvinists were right in regarding such a compromise as a weak attempt to slip the knot of the difficulty. They say, in the language of Milton's Satan:

> "The Son of God, which bears no single sense.
> The Son of God I also am or was.
> And if I was I am, relation stands.
> All men are sons of God."—*Par. Reg.* iv. 512.

Such casuistry is worthy of the father of lies, and those who quote Milton should be careful to verify their quotations, and to see into whose lips Milton has put the sentiment. In this instance it is the plea of the arch-sophist who wishes to wrest from Christ the sense of His filial duty and dependence on His Father. He sneers at His Sonship. "You a Son of God—true, but so are all men; the phrase is an empty one—all are sons of God. Even I, a fallen angel, cannot lose this dignity. I was or am, relation stands!"

No phrase can be conceived better fitted to sap the Saviour's faith in God's Fatherhood. All are sons, therefore he is. But here is only another hiss of the serpent. It is like Faust's advice to theologians to stick close to words; and that he is the best divine who can chop logic

with no real meaning in it. Truths when often used in a cant sense may be evacuated of all their inner meaning. So it has fared with the Fatherhood of God. If He is only in a vague and general sense, as Jupiter was father of gods and men, the All-Father, the Father of the dew, or the Father of ages, why not of man only *in a sense?* It is at this point that a sound psychology lends help to a sound Theology, and one truth, as is often the case in science, reaches hands to another to give it the last point of verification which it wanted. The Pneuma in man, or organ of God-consciousness, is the butt and derision of those who, with Confucius and Comte, say that human nature gets on very well as it is by troubling itself as little as possible with these vexed questions of God and the hereafter. There is that "superstition about one Jesus who was dead, and whom Paul affirmed to be alive." But to those who are not Confucianists or Comtists, this question of God and immortality is the one problem which preserves man from being the improved ape which some scientists tell us we are. To this ape ancestry we have only one reply, it shall be that of the Stoic poet: "We, too, are His offspring." But how to prove our parentage, and how to trace our descent from the unseen Father of our spirits, this is the problem which Theology passes on to psychology for solution. The true evidence for the Fatherhood of God is drawn from within. Our spiritual intuitions, when rightly consulted, lead us on to a sense of some faculty of God-consciousness. This organ of the spiritual is in every man in a latent and undeveloped state. But it is still there, and on this we may base our argument for the Fatherhood of God.

In itself this proof arising from consciousness is too simple to need to be stated at length here. Its validity depends on the strength of the argument for a faculty

in man, which carries questions of right and wrong into the inner sanctuary of the spirit, where they are judged by the standard of God's will.

We pass on to the third great truth of Theology, which calls for some restatement, and it leads out of the two former. The Being of God and the Fatherhood of God, this leads us on to the Person of Christ. So in the order of spiritual experience we rise from one height to another, and are led on to feel that if man's relationship to God is that of original sonship, some manifestation of God in our nature becomes in this way antecedently probable. In turning to the Person of Christ we are struck with this thought, that after six centuries of subtle discussion on the part of the metaphysical Greek intellect, the question is not exhausted in word-fence. Let us begin by admitting to the full our obligations to the old school of divines. It would be mere prejudice not to do so. In *form*, nothing can be added to the old controversy, extending as it does from Nice to Chalcedon. But in our mode of approaching this mystery we have much to learn. Orthodox Theology has yet to acknowledge its debt of obligation to that type of Theology which is not orthodox. But for the Humanitarians, as they are called, the Fatherhood of God would have slumbered on in the lumber-room of dead dogmas among other Church muniments. It is on this side that we must modify in modern times the doctrine of the Person of Christ. His manhood leads the way to our conception of His Godhead. The author of *Ecce Homo* would not have stirred the age with a sense of freshness in his way of viewing the story of Christ, if this had not been his point of departure. Our only hostile criticism of that book is, that it is a departure which leads nowhere; and this the writer himself seems to feel by leaving off, as it

were, with a literary fragment or *torso,* which, if we may judge by his long silence, was never intended to take shape and finish as a perfect piece of sculpture. The true teaching with regard to the Person of Christ is to be learned from an argument like that of the author of the *Christ of History,* who makes the humanity the basis of an argument for His Godhead, and so he reasons upward on lines which are those of experience, and which the evangelists are careful to follow.

The next truth of the new Theology is the mode of our reconciliation, which leads us at once to the contrast between the old and the new doctrine of the Atonement. Here we glance at the thought that the three stages which jurisprudence has passed through are the same which also must be followed out by Theology. They are these—the vindictive, the retributive, and the reformatory. Our conception of crime as a personal tort, as a *crimen,* and as a *culpa* or wrong done to self and humanity in the person of the offender,—these are the three stages which jurisprudence and Theology alike must pass through. Our conceptions of the Atonement are determined in every case by that particular stage of moral culture in which we are. Hence it would be as much out of date for us in this day to insist on the Avenger-of-blood conception of God, as it would have been premature to have taught twelve centuries ago that sin was rather a disease than a debt. The latest doctrine of the Atonement is based on the conception that what Christ came to procure by His meritorious death on the cross, was not so much a ransom-price, or even a satisfaction due by the sinner to the offended majesty of law, but a personal deliverance from the plague of self and that hell on earth of passions boiling over to the destruction of all that is good and pure in our

nature. The Theology of the future will teach a doctrine of the Atonement which is not theological only, whether forensic or federal, but which will set forth the moral and spiritual relations of the Father to His erring children on earth. It is all summed up in the last words of the parable of the prodigal son: "This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." The death of Christ explains how and in what sense we were dead, as His resurrection explains in what sense we too are made alive.

The next step in our argument for a new Theology is in pointing out what our rule of faith must be. All forms of faith must have a norm or pattern according to which they are moulded, unless this faith be a mere sentiment without any articulate form, or any expression of definite belief. We lay the more stress on this, as the new Theology has been sometimes charged with being "invertebrate," because it lays little stress on old dogmas, and even less on old and now obsolete types of Church discipline. "Invertebrate" is a mere question-begging epithet, which we can easily fling back on those who use it. But declining such personalities, we turn to the question of what our rule of faith is to be, and ask ourselves whether we are shut in to choose one of two infallibilities—either an infallible Book or an infallible Church; or whether we are free to escape the dilemma, and to reject both. We endeavoured to point out that this attempt to find a short and easy way out of our own spiritual difficulties by setting up some infallible tribunal either of the Church or the Bible, only leads us into a blind alley. There is no end of controversy such as *Roma locuta est* of the Ultramontane school, or the verbal inspiration theory, which is an attempt in the opposite extreme to lay living faith to sleep on the

pillow of some external authority. Faith refuses these false props alike of the Roman and Protestant type. *Sursum corda*—"Lift up your hearts"—this is her call, and the answer of the believing heart is always the same,—We lift them up to the Lord." Living communion with a living God can only be kept up in one way; still, in so far as faith has an intellectual element which can only be expressed in propositions, as well as a spiritual element to be expressed only in the language of spiritual experience, it is desirable to point out what the true norm or pattern is according to which faith is to be ruled.

This is threefold. Faith rests, as it were, on a kind of tripod, the three supports of which are conscience or the inner light, the written word of God, and the historical Church or the general Christian consciousness. Attempts have been made to set up one of these to the exclusion of the other two. The Mystics, the Reformers, and the Romanists have all tried to find a wayside rest on the road to God in some infallible oracle,—either the voice within, or the voice of the written word, or the voice of the chair of Peter speaking *ex cathedra*. But all have failed. These short cuts are found to be blind alleys. They lead nowhere. These wandering fires of infallibility —struck out from Church, Bible, or Conscience—are lights only leading to a quagmire. We have no other test of faith than this, by asking of each article of belief these three questions:—1. Is it true to the light within? 2. Is it supported by the authority of God's written word? 3. Does it find support in the consent of the Christian consciousness, taking Catholic consent in the widest sense of the term? There are a few truths of Theology, and only, as we admit, a few which come up to these three tests; but in proportion as a truth will bear to be tested in this way, have we the highest assurance of its truth.

In this sense will the new Theology use its rule of faith, and if it does not come to us with great swelling words of infallibility as the old Theology did, it will be infinitely more secure. The three combined are at least an infallible test, which is more than can be said for any one of the three by itself.

The education of the human race instead of its probation: this is another note of the new Theology. It marks a new departure. It is one of those "ruling ideas" which will not admit of being put into the old framework. This is a conception of the divine purposes which is quite revolutionary of our old modes of thinking. Hence, with perfect consistency, those who resist the inferences of the new Theology with regard to a larger hope and possibilities of redemption in worlds and æons beyond the present, take their stand here on the "now or never" position. They feel that concession here is to surrender the whole line of defence. All the more philosophic divines—to name only two, Bishop Butler and Bishop Newton—have thrown out hints—they are hints only in the Theology of the 18th century—that we know so little of the hereafter that it is safest not to dogmatize. But they argue that if continuity of character is to mean anything, the salvation which we all look for in Christ cannot be a sudden transformation. It must imply discipline and moral growth. The laws of the universe are the same from the highest to the lowest. It is first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. We may hold the doctrine of conversion, and, indeed, cannot hold it too distinctly. The passage from nature to grace may be sudden, it may be a change as instantaneous as that of those whose bodies are to be changed in a moment, "in the twinkling of an eye," at the last trump. But still, all the same, it will be a

change, and as such it is a process like any of the changes of nature which scientific chemistry can accelerate, but which, nevertheless, require a certain interval of time to carry through to completion.

The education, then, instead of the probation of the human family, is the keynote of the Theology of the future. It is obvious that with the Fatherhood of God for our point of departure, no other conception than this of the divine work of dealing with the race is possible. The very term "probation," with its mechanical conception of testing the strength of wood or iron up to the breaking point, is misleading on the very outset. Besides, it suggests a contradiction *ex vi terminis*. The very divines who hold that life is a state of probation, and that all probation, as they term it, is strictly limited by life, are the same who hold the dogma of original sin; and that this taint and corruption infects our natures so as to create in us such a state of moral inability that we are by nature children of wrath. The contradiction between this Augustinian Theology and the theory that life is a state of probation, is too glaring not to be seen by divines of the old school, and they get over it characteristically enough, by making a kind of see-saw between the two dogmas. At one time they assert our moral inability, and then they retract this and, instead of it, assert our responsibility. To smooth down the contradiction between these two statements, they go to the Kantian armoury for a distinction between contraries and contradictories, and tell us, as Dean Mansel has done, that there is no law of excluded middle in the case of contraries, but only of contradictories. This seems to us to be only ingenious word-fence, like the distinction of the old school divines between man's inability and disability. We are responsible, they say, for the latter, but not for

the former, which is as idle as the old quibble, that man was free to do evil but not free to do good. We might as well say that water is free to flow down-hill but not free to run up-hill, and then turn round and blame the water for causing an overflow and flooding our fields.

Such are the vain distinctions which the old Theology set up in order to escape from the toils in which it had entangled itself. The only way out of this maze of contradictions is to get back to the simplicity of divine truth as seen in the light of living experience. A Theology of experience teaches us that there is a perplexing puzzle in our nature arising from the warring within us of two tendencies, which are described as the flesh and the spirit. The Bible is by no means alone in testifying to these two natures: if it were, we should lack the grand evidence to its truth in the correspondence between our spiritual intuitions and the historical revelation. On the contrary, all the deeper thinkers alike in Greece, Rome, and India have testified to the presence of this contradiction between the ideal and the actual in man. The only point in which the Scripture account of man differs from that of other records is, in showing how God has never left Himself without a witness. Grace has always overtaken erring, fallen human nature, and either has found and brought it back, or is about to find and bring it back. The stages of man's fall are many, and so are the stages of redemption. The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. That sweet expression—"until He find it"—opens up vistas in the future which can only be explained by that other expression—that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. We have no measure of these two infinities reaching beyond both time and space. There

are Æons lying beyond to which the geological days are approximations, or, at best, faint foreshadowings. Man is the last work of nature in a retrospective series, and here science finds and leaves him. But he is the first term in a prospective series such as the heavenly hierarchy seems to shadow forth; and here, too, revelation leaves him. Our prospective glimpses are as dim as our retrospective. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; much less does it appear what the race, as a whole, is intended to rise to.

Here, then, we must leave the subject with the thought that we are saved by hope, but that this hope is like our faith, dim and indistinct. It is the evidence of things not seen, and whose only logic is a spiritual conviction. To some it is given to put forth more of this larger hope, and to feel that what has been already done for the redemption of the race, is but a mere foretaste of what will be done in the future. In a sense, the straitest sect of the Predestinarian party indulge in some larger hope for mankind at some millenarian period, limiting it, however, to the favoured generation which shall be alive at the Lord's second coming. Then all Israel shall be saved, and by their conversion, and as the result of it, the abundance of the sea and the forces of the Gentiles shall be gathered in. Such are the millennial visions of those who hold that at present "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it;" while to those who fail to find it in this life, there remains nothing but the blackness of darkness for ever. There is something ingenious in its unconscious simplicity, in the well-known story of Pope Gregory praying for, and succeeding in getting the soul of Trajan the Emperor out of hell. The clemency of Trajan was a well-known legend of that emperor, who on going to

the wars was entreated to redress a widow's wrongs. This he consented to do at once, and the incident is recorded on his column. The Pope, noticing this good deed of the heathen emperor, was so moved by it that he prayed that Trajan's soul might be released from hell, and the prayer was granted. At the same time it was intimated to him that he must not repeat requests of this kind by praying for the souls of lost unbaptized heathen. The simplicity of this story lies in its sequel. The implication that Gregory the saint was more pitiful than the Father of spirits, and that his charity reached beyond the bounds of the everlasting covenant itself, marks the age in which it arose, and the class of minds who could believe it. Their conceptions of God evidently never rose above those of the old Jupiter Tonans, who was in some way propitiated by his Son for his elect people of the Church. In any case, the story is as good an illustration as any of that habit of mind which marks the childhood of religion everywhere, and which is nowhere more seen than in patristic Theology. It is in reality anthropomorphism in its crudest form. We limit God with our own limitations of thought, and then go on with rare inconsistency to set up our cold and feeble desires for the salvation of others as if they were deeper even than those of God, the great Father of spirits, and who has said that all souls are mine. "Can a mother forget her sucking child? yea, she may forget." This is God's answer to such childish, if not presumptuous comparisons between human and divine pity for the lost. We may charitably assume that Pope Gregory's breach of orthodox propriety in overflowing only once in compassion for those whom Theology had put out of the pale of salvation, is not the only one of those happy inconsistencies by which men break loose now and

then from the fetters of system, and so become better than their creed. The rigour with which divines have barred the gates of mercy on mankind would sometimes lead one to think that they, like the majority of laymen, hold on this subject a kind of regulative faith. They hold up to themselves a creed of blank terrorism, more as a kind of safeguard to themselves. But the creed has so many loopholes, and so many kindly exceptions, that the discovery dawns on us, that probably it is only intended as a kind of way-mark set up with "No road here," to keep stragglers in the narrow path of orthodoxy, and to warn against the laxity of an immoral universalism.

Against this error in the opposite extreme—for particular redemption generally *reacts* as universalism—the doctrine of the education of the human race seems to be the only safeguard. If God has a purpose with regard to all, an eternal purpose, reaching far beyond the bounds of time and space, then that purpose can only come to pass in some stage of being beyond the present. Much of our modern thinking, which is little else than Buddhism taken over and translated into Western modes of thought, is only the outcome of this longing for life in forms beyond the present. The transmigration of souls is only the Oriental way of expressing the deep thought, that evil with us in our present life is no mere contingency, no accident to be repaired in time, but instead, has its roots in the past and the future. We see that it is shallow to shut up the whole of our existence to a one-act drama, with the curtain rising on our birth and falling on our death. We come to the conclusion, that as there are ages beyond the present, so there are dispensations in which God can deal with these spirits which pass out of time, either morally unborn, or still-born. It is a great mystery, and we are content to wait; but

we are not to be shut out from the devout contemplation of it by such a phrase as that life is a "state of probation," or such a text misunderstood, as that "where the tree falls, there it must lie."

This leads us in the last place to Eschatology, by which the circle of new aspects of truth is rounded off. For our part, we are not to be led away by such phrases as Particularist and Universalist. The late Dr. Pusey and Archdeacon Farrar, after crossing swords on this question, seem to have come together on the basis of a compromise, in which the former surrendered all that was offensive in his Particularism, and the latter much that seemed lax in his Universalism. They ended as controversialists often do, by admitting that there was more in their agreement than in their differences. Dr. Pusey, in his admission of an intermediate state not unlike the mediæval doctrine of purgatory, was prepared to meet Archdeacon Farrar at least half-way, and the duel between these two divines ended like that of Sir Richard Strachan and the Earl of Chatham:

> "The Earl of Chatham with sword drawn,
> Was waiting for Sir Richard Strachan;
> Sir Richard longing to be at 'em,
> Was waiting for the Earl of Chatham."

The doctrine of last things does not admit of solution, since it lies beyond our present horizon, and we have no *data* with which to determine the problem. All we can say is that the judge of all the earth must do right; we are sure of this, and of nothing beyond this. Here we might leave the question but for the unwise attempt of the old school of divines to push men on into belief by a peremptory stand and deliver challenge. "Believe and live," we are told, to which, of course, the opposite is, "Disbelieve and be damned." This is so simple that

it has naturally enough claimed to be "the gospel," and not to preach this "now or never" doctrine, was not to know and hold gospel truth. We are told to this day by many devout but timid minds, that writers who touch on the larger hope in the reverent strain of the late Thomas Erskine and his school are "mystical," "hazy," and so forth. The fear of this reproach of indefiniteness holds back many sincere minds who do not see any counter-dogma to set up against the old and now popular Theology of "believe and live." It is our wish to supply certain convictions on the new lines as definite as those of the old, which it is high time to remove as not adequate for the age. The one article of faith in the old Theology which we must retain in the new is, that sin being a definite evil must have a definite retribution, punishment must be proportionate to offence; and hence, that unless we play with the term infinity in a sophistical sense, or speak of sin against an infinite Being as contracting a quality of infinity from the Being sinned against, we must look on all sin as finite, and carrying with it the principle of self-extinction. Sin being in its essence selfhood, carries in its own bosom a fire and a worm which must eat into its very vitals. This at once sets us on the true track of thought with regard to the hereafter. There will be retribution most just and exact, so exact, indeed, that many will come under the judgment of God who have said, "Lord, Lord," and have even done wonders in His name. On the other hand, this retributive justice of God will have nothing vindictive about it. We have seen how jurisprudence has risen from the vindictive to the retributive, and from that at last it has moved on to the reformatory stage. The Eschatology of the future must be at least abreast of our new and more humane jurisprudence. For Theology to fall behind in its conceptions of God, and to

set up representations of His character which, from a judge on the bench, we should describe as a relic of barbarism, this is infidelity of the orthodox type, and the parent of a worse infidelity in others. We must teach a doctrine of the future which shall not err in opposite extremes as the popular doctrine to this day does. The old Theology is at once too hard and too indulgent. Its penalties are so inconceivably harsh and terroristic, that, like the penalties of the old hanging code, they are seldom enforced. When one kind of theft is punished as felony without benefit, and another is only petty larceny, the temptation is great to judges and juries to strain the law, and so redress one wrong by creating another. This was what the old Theology did with regard to future punishments. The result is a general laxity of belief all round on the subject. The age is not Universalist only because the old creeds are against it in name, and men dislike to oppose dogma with dogma. Men in our day doubt a truth which is not instantly verified by the common conscience of mankind, and at last reject it. The end of this collision between conscience and dogma is that both lose their authority, and a state of indifference ensues which is not openly agnostic in fact as well as in form, only because the term is one at present of evil repute in respectable circles, where church-going is still a family tradition.

Again, with regard to the resurrection of the body our Theology needs restatement. The Scripture doctrine is not the resurrection *of* the dead, but an Anastasis *from* the dead,—and the distinction is more than verbal. The old doctrine which Pearson on the Creed evidently held to is, that at the last day, by some fiat of Omnipotence, "all that are in the graves shall come forth," as we take the expression in its crude literalism. This is that Egyptian

doctrine of the resurrection of relics, the re-collection of the scattered particles of our animal frame, which we may describe as churchyard Theology. Between that doctrine and the old dogma of immortality of the soul there is no connection whatever: on the contrary, there is the sharpest possible contradiction. And yet the two are held together in the popular mind, bombinating from one to the other in the inconsiderate way of a bee in a bottle. The true doctrine first taught by Swedenborg is that which reconciles the old philosophic, and the new Christian doctrine of immortality; it is this, that the body is only the form or envelope of the spirit, which is, and always must be, a formative principle.

That every seed has its own body is the law of the universe, from the lowest form of being up to man the last link in the long chain of life. In man the formative principle builds around him a body of flesh, when, as we read, he is curiously formed in the lower parts of the earth. Then death comes to destroy this temple, and either, as in Christ's case, it is built again in three days, or, as in the case of the majority who pass out of existence here, the new life has its beginning only after the entire dissolution of the body. The seed then escapes from its husk and, in some way unknown to us, begins to build to itself a spiritual body, a house not made with hands, so that at the Lord's appearing—whether that be subjective or objective it matters not—we are not found naked. This is the new doctrine of the Anastasis which, unlike the patristic doctrine of the resurrection of relics, reconciles such opposite and contradictory truths as the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. So it is that truths which, when held separately, seem to be discordant, come together and harmonize when we look at them in the right light and see their inner connection.

We have lastly to glance at what we should say is the central thought of the whole, and without which the term new Theology would be at best an unmeaning phrase. There are certain intuitions which we may describe as spiritual, and which, if consulted aright, may be said to contain the germ of all those truths which are in deepest correspondence with all that we specially describe as the gospel scheme. The difficulty, of course, lies in determining what are and what are not genuine and original intuitions. We are in great danger of taking the afterthoughts of Theology for its primitive teaching. In the same way we are in equal danger of confounding what are not with what are genuine intuitions.

This question of intuitions may be frittered away in mere verbal discussion, as the similar question of innate ideas was a century ago, when it was said that if these ideas, as they were called (images painted on the cerebrum, as they were crudely described by the school of Locke), truly were existent, we could go to primitive human nature and detect them there. Locke wrote against this, and Hume at last demolished this theory of innate ideas; and so Kant awoke from his dogmatic slumbers to recast psychology on new lines altogether of the laws of thought.

In the same way we have to deal with our spiritual intuitions. It will only mislead us if we begin by assuming the existence of certain innate convictions such as the sense of sin, the desire for holiness, and the craving for communion with God, and to describe these as spiritual intuitions, and so to build on this foundation a structure of spiritual Theology. Many writers have done so; but however interesting and ingenious a Theology built upon a basis of spiritual intuitions, it is only a house of cards which they have erected. The Positivist

will say he knows nothing of this sense of sin or of longing for the unseen, and for him this intuition is explained away by reference to the case of the late J. S. Mill, who described it as the dwarfed and mutilated sense of poetry asserting itself late in life. To this we have no reply to give but one: that there are powers latent in human nature which it is a long time before we are fully conscious of. The spiritual in man does not come to the surface of consciousness often till late in life, if at all. Hence the truth of the apostle's words: Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.

The true order must be to begin with our external life, and so on to our interior until we reach the spiritual in the last recess of all. We are made up, as we pointed out, of wants which are purely animal, of wishes which are partly animal and partly intellectual, and of a will which is spiritual in its germ and essence. Wants and wishes alike have to be submitted to the will and regulated in subjection to it. This is the discipline of life, and in proportion as the will can restrain the lower desires of the flesh—which are our wants—as well as the vaguer and vaster desires of the mind—which are our wishes—and hold them in control, can it be said that there is a healthy moral nature. The will is sovereign, —*i.e.* it is the rightful over-lord of our nature. But it is never a final law in itself. At every act of the will we are conscious that it is alternately lord and vassal. It is lord of the lower nature, but in its turn it is the vassal of a power higher than itself, to which it owes fealty and allegiance.

It is at this point, then, where the will reaches the stage of God-consciousness, that our spiritual intuitions—properly so called—begin. Man is a being conscious of

dependence, and the sense of dependence begins at the point where he feels his superiority to all life below him: he is also conscious of his own subjection to the will of God. This new sense of dependence is the root of all religious feeling. But for this, it could not be said that man had a religious nature at all; but on this ineradicable conviction that he is not an end in himself, but only the last link of one being and the first of another, —the *fibula duarum naturarum*,—we are able to affirm that he is a spiritual being, and in a direct relation of dependence to the Lord of life and the Father of spirits. On this argument we ground the statement that there are spiritual instincts on which we can rear up what we may ultimately describe when we have set them in their true relation to each other, as the Theology of intuition. The old Theology was experimental, and laid great stress on an introspective sense of indwelling sin. But this introspective Theology, which was emotional only, often took its rise from a morbid view of life and a narrow and partial conception of evil. It was good as far as it went, but it did not go far enough. It did not draw out all our intuitions. It harped too much on one string, and the consequence was that for want of breadth and sympathy with life in all its bearings, it has been left behind, and is now very much a thing of the past. This decline of Pietism is to be regretted on many grounds, as this introspective Theology, with all its narrowness, was the means of moulding some of the finest types of Christian character. It ran too much into excess when it laid such stress on its frames and feelings; and in such diaries as those of Henry Martyn we find it producing a morbid and self-questioning type of character. But as this is certainly not one of the faults of the Theology of our day, we need not complain of it on that

score. Introspective Theology has done good service in its day, but like all truths by painful iteration it has lost its freshness, and is now laid aside or has fallen into the background. We can no more revive Puritanism than we can Anglicanism: the dead must bury their dead. But what we can do is to draw out that which is its modern substitute and equivalent. This is intuitional Theology. When we cross-question consciousness, we find that there are at least three high and original instincts of our nature, for which a remedial scheme like the gospel seems a special provision. We have a sense of defect, we have a desire after holiness, and also a longing for union with God through the putting away of sin and the imparting of holiness. These are genuine instincts not equally felt, it is true, by all, but struggling into consciousness in every case; and if smothered at all, as they too often are, then visiting us with a sense of inward misery and dissatisfaction, for which all men suffer who thus do wrong to their true nature. The best and purest souls are those who feel all these three convictions, of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as we may describe them in Scripture language. In their case the spiritual nature is fully unfolded, and they are led and taught of God's Spirit. In the case of the majority, however, these instincts are only dim and indistinct, they are at best little more than

> "Blind nestlings unafraid,
> Who ope wide mouths at every shade
> With which their downy dream is stirred,
> Taking it for the parent bird."

Such are these spiritual intuitions in the case of the majority of mankind. But the fact of their existence at all is the evidence that we are in search of. It is the proof of man's true relation to God, which is that of a

child, but of one who is an orphan, of a great unseen and unknown Father. The promise of Christ is, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you;" hence the promise of the Spirit to be given to remove this sense of orphanhood, and to implant in its stead the sense of sonship—for this is the purpose for which the Holy Spirit is given to us.

To sum up, these intuitions by themselves would not constitute a Theology any more than appetites can satisfy themselves. There must be bread for the hunger of the body, and, similarly, there must be bread for the hunger of the soul. But without an appetite, of what use, in either case, would the bread be? as conversely, without a supply for these instincts or desires, of what use would it be to point to their existence? God never mocks His children in this way, by implanting spiritual instincts and then leaving them to starve or to feed on themselves. If we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, much more will our heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. It is a case of those that ask having, those that seek finding, and to those who knock it is opened. The Theology of intuition is thus only the old Theology purged of some of its too introspective character, and extended so as to include all that is genuinely spiritual in human nature. Here we may conclude. It is presumptuous to expect that any one draft of Theology can be complete, nor do we expect or desire that the Theology of our day will meet the wants of some unborn age and generation of men. Enough for us if it is abreast of the convictions of our day, as much as the Puritan Theology was abreast of the best thinking of that day, and the scholastic in its turn was abreast of the age of the schoolmen. We only find fault with the old Theology in so far as it is forced upon us through the

timidity and sequaciousness of the divines of our day,—too indolent to think out the problem afresh for themselves, and too sceptical of truth to admit that truth is one, but the moulds into which it is poured are as many and various as the successive ages and generations of men. Till divines come to see that the essence is constant and the form variant, they will continue to raise vain laments when they see the form perishing and the inner essence renewing itself in some fresh form. "Thou turnest man to destruction; again, Thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men." Such is the course of all human affairs, alike in politics and religion. The form perishes, but the inner life renews itself in a wonderful way. All Church history is one long comment on the law of decay and renewal, and those who glory in the Reformation and boast that they inherit the birthright of Protestantism in the right of private judgment, should reflect that rights and duties are correlative. As Protestants they have less excuse than others for that timid traditionalism which cannot bear even to admit the need of a new Theology to express the changed ideas of a new age. But in spite of these unmanly laments, *eppur si muove*, the world moves on in spite of these conservatives of a dead past, and when a new and living faith has clothed itself with a new form adequate to express its best convictions, none are so surprised as those who said that the dewdrop fell into the shell only that it might perish, or that the pearl was torn from the shell also to its destruction,—

> "Oh, unbelieving, so it came to gleam,
> Rich jewel, in a monarch's diadem."

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